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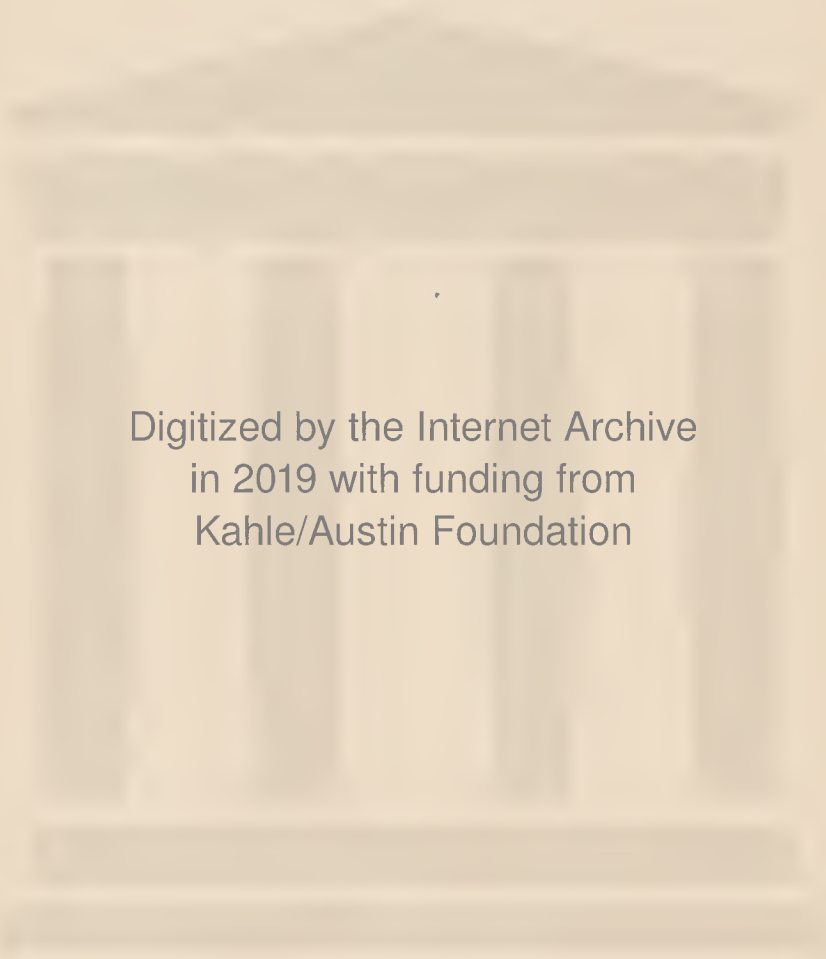

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STENDHAL

STENDHAL

(HENRI BEYLE)

BY

PAUL HAZARD

TRANSLATED
FROM THE FRENCH BY
ELEANOR HARD

PUBLISHED IN NEW YORK BY
COWARD-McCANN, INC.
IN THE YEAR 1929

QL936 .H32

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PRINTED IN THE U. S. A.

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Part I

THE APPRENTICESHIP OF HENRI BEYLE

CHAPTER I

Beginning the Journey

EVERYTHING depends on the start.

When Henri Beyle was born in Grenoble, January 23, 1783, the spirit of the times was such that he had hardly cut his first tooth and lisped his first words when the powers that be seized upon him to model the child in their own image, to carve out one more pillar for the established order.

The old provincial city seemed to say: "You must walk very straight in the street, my child, for a curtain will lift ever so little at the corner of every window you pass and an eye peep to watch you. You must be thoughtful, good, discreet and careful. Heavens! What would people say if you stole an apple or threw a stone?"

There was the family. "Providence is kind to us," said his father, Cherubin Beyle, legal advisor to Parliament. "We have a son to carry on the name." And he looked tenderly at his first-born, dreaming pleasant dreams of the future when little

Henri would himself follow the law. He would haggle with the peasants, certainly, and, most savory of pleasures, gain ten écus on a sale. He would be respected in his parish, think the right thoughts, enjoy the right kind of income and marry the right kind of a girl. In short, if his father had anything to say about it, he would be an exact replica of that best and most intelligent of men, Cherubin Beyle.

Aunt Seraphie had her finger in the pie. She agreed on the whole with Cherubin, but laid even more emphasis on an upright life and strict attention to devotions, for she was an old maid and disapproved of life.

Professors, duly chosen by the Established Authorities, arrived one by one to add their mites. First of all came a mountaineer pedant named Joubert. He wore a shabby black frock coat and boasted the height of five foot six. When he leaned over the child the pair might have passed for Tom Thumb and the Ogre. His successor was Abbé Raillanne: slight, wizened, pinched and fussy, with bushy eyebrows and a glass eye. The Abbé loved orange trees, which he delighted to raise in tubs, and canary birds, which he kept in a large

aviary at the foot of his pupil's bed: but he had no love for children. His plan for Henri's life was that he should learn grammar by heart and become an accomplished humanist, able to compose a perfect Latin poem on a fly drowning in a glass of milk. He advised Henri to be measured in gesture, timid in thought, shrewd in conversation, knowing, discreet and insinuating—in short, an exact replica of that most perfect of men, the Abbé Raillanne.

Everyone who came near the child attempted to twist him into some way of acting or thinking, some taste or habit. Even the humblest, possessed of only a fraction of power, even the valet Lambert and the housemaid Marian, would gladly have left their imprint on the master's son, in the mornings when he invaded their kingdom, the kitchen. Even family friends would stop him on the street corner, pinch his ear, and draw him into edifying conversation. Of these was M. Barthélemy d'Orbane, to whom Henri owed his lifelong gift for making faces: a gift which M. d'Orbane had quite unconsciously developed to a fine art.

So it is that society perpetuates itself, and

human beings, that they may not drown in eternity, clutch at little children.

But this particular child struggled desperately against all influence. He was not born to fit into any mold. He beat off the efforts of his familiar demons, all the pious examples to the young, and givers of good advice. He struggled. How he struggled! The more conscious he grew of himself, the more he discovered in his heart loves and hates no human being had ever taught him: they were the tokens of his release.

His love he kept for his mother, beloved vision ravished from him by death when he was only seven, and for all his mother's clan, the Gagnons. Great Aunt Elizabeth Gagnon, for instance, was old and wrinkled and a family joke because of her romantic Spanish temperament: but she was one of his favorites: and Grandfather Gagnon was his particular pet. Grandfather Gagnon lived in an opulent house on the corner of Grande Rue and Place Grenette, and in a very different style from that of the Beyles in Rue des Vieux Jesuites, where everything was damp and musty: humid stairway, locked doors and ill-lighted rooms. The house in Place Grenette was

a fairyland in comparison. There was a drawing room in the Italian style, a library where strange stones lay piled in magic heaps in glass cases, and an arbor on the terrace outside. Where in Grenoble, or in the whole wide world, could you have found a lovelier kingdom for a child? The arbor and terrace alone would have sufficed to make him happy. The chimes of Saint André echoed there at sunset, and the voices of the servants at the pump in the square; and at night Grandfather Gagnon spoke to every star by name. For Grandfather Gagnon was no ordinary man. He had been known as the leading doctor of Grenoble in his day, and the townspeople always saluted him with respect, while he answered them with a friendly wave of the hand. He wore a wig with three rows of curls, and carried a little tricorn tucked under his left arm; never, by any chance, on his head. And no one in the world was as learned as he. He had made a pilgrimage to Ferney, and a bust of Voltaire, king of the philosophers, stood in the place of honor on his mantelpiece. He stood for progress and enlightenment. Little Henri wanted to have Grandfather Gagnon all to himself.

He hated Aunt Seraphie, on the other hand, and most of his professors—especially Abbé Raillanne—and all their friends, and their allies, in short every intruder who tried to twist or thwart his decided little personality.

"Honor thy father and thy mother....."

Henri knew the commandment and despised it. He hated Cherubin, and he intended to go right on hating him. They might have lectured him and shamed him, they might have told him indefinitely that little boys always love their fathers, they might have beaten him: he would still have detested Cherubin. His hatred was not yet openly expressed, but it lay coiled in the deepest part of his soul.

The times were troubled, and the child early heard words whose sense was obscure to him; snatches of disquieting phrases. One morning, leaning out of the window, he saw a filthy old woman reel down the street crying: "I'm sick of it!" and a little later a man passed by, covered with blood, supported by two companions. And those extraordinary events, apparently, were called "a revolution."

His family were bourgeois and believed de-

voutly in the principles on which society is founded—the principles which permit honest lawyers to earn their living in peace and even store a bit away for the future. When the old régime fell, they were convinced that the end of the world had come with abomination and desolation. Cherubin was on the list of suspects during the "Terror" and had to hide, or make pretence of hiding, while various priests, suspects like himself, took refuge with him, and the women of the family wept and prayed.

Henri Beyle on the other hand approved of this thing called a Revolution. The fugitives he detested, chiefly because of their unquenchable appetite for Cherubin's fresh salted pork: Henri always hated people who ate greedily. Therefore, since the Revolution pursued them, hurrah for the Revolution! Since Abbé Raillanne was completely discomfited and Cherubin ashen with fear, hurrah again for the Revolution! Lucky beggars in the street, singing the *Carmagnole!* Lucky children, training in the Place Grenette, soldiers of the Battalions of Hope!

One evening the child eluded his family, slipped out of the house and made his way to the Jacobin

club, where young Brutuses no older than he were already making orations. He came home from the meeting in disappointment and disgust. Little as he cared for the gluttons at home, he cared still less for people who had been so long removed from soap and water. However, most of their ideas seemed excellent, and it had been an amusing adventure: hurrah for the Revolution!

He was not a consistent disciple and changed party with astonishing ease. At times he plotted against instead of for the Tree of Liberty; but through all apparent contradictions he pursued one steady ideal: action, feeling, struggle against something or someone: life.

The more earnestly his elders watched over him, and the more they sought to protect him, the more slyly he outwitted them and the more earnestly he believed exactly the opposite of anything they tried to teach him. "They spend hours," he thought, "preaching 'religion,' 'virtue,' and 'morality': these must be detestably false things. If they were true things, why should anyone take so much trouble to convince me of them? If they were lovable, why should anyone take so much trouble to make me love them?"

"You are making a big mistake the way you spoil that brat," said Aunt Seraphie severely to Doctor Gagnon. "He has an evil character. Before he was out of the cradle, he bit Mme. Pison-Dugulland on the cheek when she tried to kiss him, and he nearly killed Mme. Chenavez before he was three, dropping a knife on her from your balcony as she walked by underneath. Mark my words: he will end on the gibbet—or on the scaffold as you say nowadays. . . ."

* * *

Doctor Gagnon was one of the committee which undertook to organize the École Centrale in Grenoble; Henri's education was entrusted to him and to his institution. The Écoles Centrales were, alas, created by those unholy Republicans up in Paris: invented by philosophers and freethinkers to take the place of the good old-fashioned colleges. And the curriculum was horrifying to a conservative ear: very little Latin, lots of drawing, history and science: and even law, at such a tender age. The Beyles deplored it, but it couldn't be helped. France showed no signs of coming back to her senses, and no sensible business man sulks too long under a new government.

Henri Beyle was thirteen when he entered the École Centrale in November, 1796: he was sixteen when he left it. He was passing through the most thankless age: the age at which young men begin to pity their elders for the bad job they have made of the world: the age at which they want to begin everything anew; the age at which they are eager, proud, supercilious and stupid; when the human plant, feeling its quickening sap, stands in awe of its own mysterious awakening.

Beyle grew taller and heavier, and changed completely in appearance. He had a wonderful new gray frock, which from a distance made him look almost like a grown man, and he sought hopefully in every mirror he passed for the first hairs on his chin.

Every morning he walked over to the École Centrale to sketch the head of Cicero, estimate the volume of a pyramid, or listen to the lectures of a certain Dubois Fontanelle, who had once cut quite a figure in the literary world of Paris. Fontanelle surprised the children by talking of French writers instead of Greeks and Romans, and even of an Englishman named Shakespeare, whose

tragedies—so he said—were full of dread and beautiful things.

Every day brought fresh surprises and discoveries for Henri. Books which had once been stern teachers with forbidding faces were now close friends who spoke to him of thoughts and dreams. Tears, hot tears, fell on the pages of the *Nouvelle Héloise.*

He exhausted the approved books, and turned to forbidden ones. Doctor Gagnon shut his eyes or looked the other way while his grandson roamed at will through his big library, and devoured La Fontaine's *Fables* along with *Félicie, ou mes Frédaines.*

He turned from books only to discover the theatre. Henri was young, of course, but there could be no harm in his seeing *Le Cid: Le Cid* is a classic, and classics are automatically harmless.

Le Cid lifted Henri to a celestial world, and a world in which his fancy throughout his life loved to wander. Chimène was deliciously lovely and lovable, in her blue satin dress and little white satin slippers: and the Cid, in spite of the fact that he was so inexpert with his sword that Don Diegue came near losing an eye in earnest, was all

a romantic hero should be. Reality ceased to exist for Henri, and he had a lofty scorn for earth.

At about the same time he discovered the mountains—those old, familiar mountains which he had never noticed because they were always there, —and loved them. Cherubin's estate at Claix was no longer merely "down in the country." It was Nature, in true Rousseau style. As for Uncle Romain Gagnon, the Doctor's son and Seraphie's brother, he was transformed from a mere uncle into a leading character, and even the hero of the whole play: for Henri discovered that women worshipped Romain, and that no beauty in Grenoble could resist him; and so an aureole hung around his classic brow. Even little Pauline, instead of being an inconvenient sister, and a silly little girl to be teased, was gradually advanced to the rank of a confidante; and the two of them, Henri and Pauline, leagued themselves in turn against their younger sister, Caroline Zenaide, who was a little liar and a talebearer and a worm, unworthy to tie up the strings of Henri's shoes.

And finally, an inexplicable embarrassment seized upon him. He flushed red if someone mentioned Mlle. Cubly, who sang so charmingly at

the Grand Theatre. He pored over her name on the billboards, and the very sight of it threw him into a happy trance. He dreamed of her at night, and woke to murmur her name again and again. Days when his courage was superhumanly high, he walked by her house in the Rue des Clercs—at an hour, of course, when he was certain not to meet her. If he saw her coming toward him in the distance on the street, he fled in terrified confusion.

As for the École Centrale, it was an apprenticeship for Henri and not an entirely pleasant one. His days there were full of irritations and humiliations: little egos that brushed against his own; pricks in his vanity; patronizing young nobles called to the blackboard to show off, valley peasants who teased him brutally for his little girl ways. Secretly hurt more than he showed, he grew brusque in his turn and carried a perpetual chip on his shoulder. One of them called him the Walking Tower, which was, of course, a very silly joke: and he in his turn drew a caricature of Odru, the idiot, on the wall, which was, of course, a very witty joke. Odru on his side, boxed Beyle's ears, and Beyle thereupon formally challenged him to

a duel. They provided themselves with witnesses and two enormous horse pistols, found a quiet spot on the ramparts which seemed an appropriate place for two gentlemen to settle an affair of honor, and would have fought it out had not a gang of street urchins pursued them with derisive laughter and refused to leave them and go home.

Little by little, ambition grew stronger in young Henri's heart. "I have to conquer or die," he said.

Pupil Beyle had to appear before Judge Gagnon and his associates in the final examinations, and to his horror, got hopelessly entangled in his theorems. His grandfather teased him about it when he came home that afternoon. "All you could show us," said Grandfather Gagnon, "was your big rear."

The second year he gritted his teeth, won a First Prize in literature, and suffered from a rush of pride to the head. And then, in the year VII of the Republic, One and Indivisible, his triumph came, not only in the contests during Fructidor, but in those of the month of Ventose.

Mathematics were his bugbear, and though he might easily have learned his theorems by heart the way the others did, his instinctive intellectual

honesty would not allow him to do so. "It is evident that. . ." droned the Professor, and "It is evident that . . ." babbled the children; but Beyle was not at all sure that it was evident, and he would not concede anything to be proved that he did not understand himself. He therefore tutored in mathematics, and worked like a beaver until he narrowly escaped working himself into brain fever, and grew a fine crop of hair from refusing to stop work long enough to go to the hairdresser.

The examinations came at last, the jury retired to deliberate, and the students wandered nervously up and down the streets of Grenoble, waiting, keyed-up and anxious in spite of their apparent self-confidence: proud young peasants, sure that the world had its eye on them, and already elbowing each other to snatch a good place in their first vanity fair. Awkward young peasants, dressed in their best Sunday suits, and not quite sure what to do with their big red hands and their big stumbling feet.

The official notice was posted at last on the door of the Concert Hall, and the crowd ran to it. Eight faces beamed. The kindly Jury had decreed no fewer than eight first prizes: eight!

But among those immortal names, the name of Henri Beyle shone with unparalleled splendor: he was first among the first. "The exactness which Citizen Beyle demonstrated in all his answers," said the Notice, "and the ease with which he performed his calculations, have led the jury, without drawing lots, to present him with Euler's *Introduction to Infinitesimal Analysis.*"

He went back through the city gardens, his heart swollen with pride, swimming on a tide of admiration from his faithful admirers,—good-natured Mante, sturdy Bigillion and his companion in study, Louis Crozet, whose round, pasty face and quick, sensitive soul were akin to Henri's own. He examined Euler's *Introduction to Infinitesimal Analysis* with awe and strove to believe in his new-won glory. And then the generosity of all truly great conquerors stirred within him, and he said:

"At such a moment, you could pardon all your enemies."

"On the contrary," cried Bigillion, "at such a moment, you could pursue and conquer them."

After such triumphs, the obvious road opened before him. Only the École Polytechnique was

worthy of his budding genius. Even Cherubin agreed with Doctor Gagnon and the professors that such a young man was predestined to the study of science, and would one day be a famous mathematician and the pride of Grenoble, and that he should certainly be enrolled in the École Polytechnique as a beginning.

France was in such a disturbed condition in the year 1799 under the Republic that the written and oral examinations, always so dear to the heart of any French government, were completely disorganized. The examiners could not come, as usual, to Grenoble. The candidates had to go to Paris.

* * *

The diligence was about to leave, and the Beyles and Gagnons were gathered together around it. "Keep an eye on Henri, won't you?" said Doctor Gagnon to M. Rosset, who was going back to Paris on business. "You may count on me, my dear sir," said M. Rosset. Pauline looked quite pale, and Cherubin wept openly. Henri thought secretly: "How homely he is . . ."

The travelers were crowded into the big yellow coach, the postilion climbed up like a monkey and

cracked his whip. Good-bye, City Gardens. Good-bye, alleys of chestnuts, ravaged by the autumn. Good-bye, Gate of France. Grenoble, good-bye.

"Business is bad," M. Rosset began sententiously. "We are badly governed. What are all these deputies, tribunes and directors good for, pray? To preach and gabble. While they argue, commerce languishes and dies: and commerce, mind you, young man, is the soul of the nation."

Beyle listened to him in silence and despised him.

As the horses were being changed for the next stage at Nemours, agitated voices brought the travelers extraordinary news: General Bonaparte the day before, the 18th Brumaire, had ordered his grenadiers into the House of Deputies, and—all was over. Alas for the Republic: it was dead. But after all, was it not for the best? Things had gone too far.

Sad, squalid suburbs; wheels splashing on cursing passers-by; people hurrying about the streets in a meaningless way; street after street after street; high gray houses. Paris. M. Rosset dropped Henri at a house on the corner of Rue de Bour-

gogne and Rue Saint Dominique, shook hands with him cordially, and disappeared.

Henri was free. Glorious days seemed to stretch endlessly before him. He looked down a vista of innumerable tomorrows to be filled with adventure. His family and all the false friends who would have possessed his soul were as far away as if at the ends of the earth. He was his own master, and had but to choose between a thousand delightful prospects.

His school friends had already made their choice and entered upon irrevocable paths. One was carrying on his father's, and his grandfather's calling; pushing a little farther the profound impulse of all his line. Another had heard the call of a vocation for religion. One was making his way peacefully toward honor and fortune; the other marching securely forward, armed with unshakable faith, into the misty fields of the eternal.

Not so Henri Beyle, whose only faith was in himself, who fled security for fear it spelled bondage, and who would cheerfully have staked his entire happiness on one throw of the dice. Adoles-

cent, barely seventeen, new to life, foolhardy adventurer, he asked only to dare the great adventure of happiness as he wanted to; with nothing to impede him and no one to help him on, quite by himself—alone.

What was his definition of happiness? He could not have told you. It was not to be found in the conquest of the Paris which he observed from his window every night. It was not to be found alone in wealth. Happiness, perhaps, meant freedom: freedom to dream, and to do just what he wanted to do just when he wanted to. Happiness was love given in return for love. Happiness was the immediate and the impossible, and above all, the sweet promises with which the future seemed thronged.

His family, his friends and his professors all wanted him to go to the École Polytechnique, but Henri Beyle had already made up his mind that he did not want to go, and that settled the question once and for all. His own will was his only law.

And so he let the examination time go by without presenting himself. He wandered through Paris, dreamed before shop windows, bought

books, mingled with the elated crowds which hailed Bonaparte. He went to meet happiness, happiness which wanders down every street. Such was the manner of his setting forth in life.

* * *

CHAPTER II

Uncertainty

In a short time, Henri had drawn three conclusions about Paris. One: it was ugly, with not a mountain on the horizon. Two: it was insolent, with rich people covering you with mud as they swept by in their carriages, and never even apologizing. Three: it was gigantic and oblivious: you could pace the streets for hours on end without seeing a familiar face.

A few Polytechnicians, who had apparently passed the examinations with no trouble whatever in spite of their comparative inferiority in mathematics, came to see their former comrade in Grenoble in his lodgings near them over by the Invalides: but the visits soon stopped. Those respectable young men, given to petty economies and arguments with the landlord when a stick was missing from their kindling, had nothing in common with the youthful Conqueror of Happiness.

Came a change of quarters, an illness—and

then a blank page on which not a single memory was inscribed.

When Henri Beyle came to himself once more, he was in bed and very ill. A red hot stove stood much too near for comfort, and a doctor leaned over him, felt his pulse, and remarked with a shake of the head to Cousin Daru, standing beside him:

"Hydropsy of the chest, accompanied by a certain amount of delirium. A very bad case."

* * *

Old Cousin Daru had rescued the lost child and taken him over to the Daru house.

The house stood on Rue de Lille at the corner of Rue Bellechasse. The master of it, Pierre Daru, contented himself with the apartment above the porte cochère, and rented the other floors at a comfortable profit. What with that and other things, he was a rich man. His family consisted of Mme. Daru, his wife (so old! and so shriveled! thought young Henri), and half a dozen children. There was Pierre, who was much looked up to, partly because he was chief of a division in the Ministry of War, and partly because he had translated Horace and composed a *Cléopedie:* but mostly

because he had an abominable character, and if your character is only bad enough the entire world will respect you. Then there was Martial, who was completely useless, and beloved by everybody for his sunny nature. Finally, there were various girls —some married, some still waiting patiently for husbands.

Good lord, thought Henri: how can I live in such an atmosphere? He had to practice caution and politeness all day; eat everything that was set on the table, whether he liked it or not, with protestations that it was excellent, and be careful not to stumble over any of the furniture that was crowded into that tiny Parisian apartment. Sometimes he made his appearance in the salon, or accompanied the ladies of the family on their round of calls, or followed Pierre Daru, the great man with the Homeric brow, in his dignified peregrinations through literary society. It was a stifling life for a valiant seeker after liberty. The Darus must have felt as if they were trying to teach parlor tricks to a mad dog.

Then Daru senior began to drop hints, none too subtle hints on the subject of young men; who, said Daru, cannot spend their lives in complete

idleness, even when visiting the most affectionate of cousins.

These hints apparently remaining without effect, Pierre Daru one morning took the young man firmly by the arm and led him to the Ministry of War. You don't have to be endowed with a heaven-sent vocation to make a good clerk.

* * *

Mazoyer, the clerk who had the other desk in the office, and whose boast it was that he had written *Theseus,* a tragedy in five acts, all in verse, looked the new arrival over and decided that he seemed inoffensive. He had no literary taste to be sure, and made feeble attempts to defend the barbarian Shakespeare against the immortal Racine; but his ideas were jejeune and not dangerous, and he was evidently a man of fine feeling, for he grew delightfully sentimental over the elms that languished in the courtyard of the Ministry, was vastly annoyed when some worldly soul pruned them, and announced that they were his best, his only friends.

When interrogated on the subject of Henri's business capacities, however, Pierre Daru could only shake his head. "He has less than no admin-

istrative sense," he said. "He tries to send notes directly through the Ministry instead of going by way of the division chiefs, and his letters usually have to be rewritten: his spelling is incredibly bad. Believe it or not, he writes *'cela'* with two l's!" The entire family was properly horrified.

As the weeks went on, Pierre Daru took to leaving at dawn and coming home late after dinner. He was rushed with work, together with the rest of the Ministry. The First Consul was making ready to descend on Italy in person, and force the Austrians back across the Alps, and the entire government labored at top speed to make everything ready.

An inspiration came to the Daru: they would send inconvenient little Henri down to reserve headquarters in Milan. He could hardly do worse there than in Paris, and Cousin Gagnon could keep an eye on him.

* * *

A certain Captain Burelviller, a big, blond, cynical adventurer with a fine mustache, rode out along the Italian road from Geneva one day, and happened to witness a curious scene.

He was riding along, thinking of nothing much,

when a young man in the costume of a French soldier, booted and—most foolishly—spurred, appeared apparently from nowhere perched on top of a very big light bay horse. The horse, evidently of a dominating disposition, was in complete control of the situation, and had taken a fancy to a rural life in the pretty willow-edged fields along the side of the road. The rider—to give him an inaccurate title—made soothing but futile attempts with flattering names and jerks on the bridle; the horse only smiled the more with his yellowed teeth, and cantered gaily on through the meadows.

The Captain, after observing this pastoral scene for a moment, felt a generous impulse to intervene, sent a servant after the young man, and a minute later saw him led ignominiously back to the road.

Beyle was humiliated almost beyond endurance. He looked haughtily at the Captain and put one hand with a superb gesture on the hilt of his pistol.

"And what did you wish, sir?" he said, as if to imply that he had been rudely interrupted in the midst of a pleasant canter.

Captain Burelviller bowed and assured him that he wished only the honor of his company. The comrade was going down to rejoin his regiment in Italy, perhaps? It was, perhaps, his first campaign? But he knew already how to handle a firearm and could acquit himself creditably with a saber if need be?

The comrade would have died rather than admit that his father Cherubin had never allowed him to risk his precious life in dangerous exercises like horseback riding; or that he had been brought up in a heated glass case, sheltered from wind and rain; or that the mere carrying of his big saber had given him blisters already. Captain Burelviller listened wtih mock gravity, and was charmed with the lad's naïveté and with his pugnacious efforts to conceal his distress.

And so they rode forward together to meet adventure. Adventure was plentiful on any road in those days: each evening meant a fresh struggle for a place to sleep in and a blanket to put over them—struggles not with the broken-spirited inhabitants, but with other wandering soldiers who took bed and board where they could, on the general principle of might makes right. Strange

brothers-in-arms, those infantrymen and cavalrymen, Henri discovered: nothing at all like the nobly spoken heroes of Tasso and Ariosto. Villainous looking men, who swore like a thousand devils and brushed anyone aside, with a lowering look.

They came to the mountains, and climbed painfully up the great St. Bernard pass, through mist and snow, and by perpendicular paths where the horses clung to the side of the precipice and slipped on bits of loose rock.

One day they heard the sound of cannonading, and realized that they must pass through the fire from Fort de Bard.

"Are you afraid, conscript?" laughed the Captain.

"Afraid!" said Henri.

He made a point of riding nearer the fort than was strictly necessary, and dallied ostentatiously through the cannon fire. Was that all being "under fire" amounted to? It was nothing at all. The Captain was properly impressed.

They made their way down into the plain, and stopped at Ivrée where they were billeted for the night. Beyle insisted on going to the opera to the

disgust of the Captain, who feared a brawl; but he finally left his saber at home by way of compromise.

They were giving Cimarosa's *Matrimonio Segreto,* and from the first note Beyle was out of this world and into heaven. He was completely swept off his feet by Caroline's tragic story: poor Caroline, who had secretly wed her beloved Paolino when her father would have had her marry Count Robinson, the stupid noble. The music wept and murmured, but gracefully and lightly, like a discreet friend, who can sympathize without being officious. Ten and twenty times the same theme came back without ever growing tiresome: a winged phrase whose coming was awaited; sweet passionate strains lending tremulous emotion to banal words; violins thrilling to the finger tips—new and celestial joys! Beyle was in transports; in ecstasies. Never in all his young life had he known such happiness.

They reached Milan, and there, not three feet away from the horse's nose when they stopped was Martial—Martial himself, handsome as a god in his blue coat and embroidered cap.

"We were beginning to be afraid you were lost," said Martial.

"My horse got sick in Geneva," said Henri.

"Get off, and I'll show you the house," said Martial. "It's only a few yards from here."

And Martial took his cousin to the Casa d'Adda, on the Corso del Giardino. It was a magnificent palace, with a stairway built for giants, pictures and statues. So many wonderful new things, so many glimpses into a new world, made Henri feel as if he lived in a dream.

Martial had cutlets milanaise for dinner to bring him back to earth again.

* * *

CHAPTER III

"The Two Years of Sighs, Tears, Love and Melancholy I Spent in Italy."

HENRI was going to love his Italy, one day: he was going to love her so much that he would come to believe that he had always loved her: that hardly through the gate of Milan, that happy morning in Prairial, he had been sublimely convinced that he had at last found his native country, that joy had surged instinctively in his heart, that he had been seized with profound tenderness for her, and that he had abandoned himself completely to the strange, new life that was revealed to him. That Italy had wielded an instantaneous and fatal charm and vanquished him forever.

Alas, things did not come about in that charmingly appropriate way. His unformed soul was not made to fall too quickly into any definite mould. His enduring love for Italy began with bewilderment, hesitant attempts, varying frames of

mind, and sometimes, suffering barely illumined by a ray of hope.

* * *

The fate of Lombardy was sealed at Marengo and Bonaparte made his entry into an hysterical capital. Bells were still ringing; flags still floated on the wind.

Beyle idled through Milan and observed the Milanese. They seemed to fall into two classes: the ones who hurried to their daily work, and the ones who lounged around as comfortably as Henri.

He stopped and observed the Duomo, his nose in the air, and thought of Pauline, who would have been fascinated by it. At least she could hear about it from her affectionate brother.

"As you know," he wrote, "I am in Milan, a city about the size of Grenoble, and fairly well built. They have a church here in the Gothic style, that is to say all of stone filigree, in the shape of pointed arches, instead of round Romanesque ones, which is an astonishing thing when you study it carefully, but does not seize upon your imagination at first as does the sublimity of the Pantheon.

"To picture it to yourself, you must imagine a circular gallery fifty or sixty feet long, and as high as four steeples like our Saint Andre's, piled on top of each other. The church is far from finished, and probably never will be. It is not particularly attractive on the inside, and is interesting chiefly as attesting to the infinite patience of the many workmen who helped in its construction. There are perhaps a thousand statues on it, anywhere from six inches to forty feet in height . . ."

(*Milan, 10 Messidor, Year VIII*)

The Duomo, however curious, was nothing compared to the Scala in Henri's eyes. He found theatre, scenery, music, singers, orchestra and costumes all equally superb. The Scala, wrote Henri to Pauline, was one of the wonders of the world, and it was a shame she had to miss it, languishing there in Grenoble instead of voyaging through the great world.

"I went to the theatre yesterday," he wrote, "in spite of a bad cold I caught in these thick Lombard mists, to see the first performance of Carnival time. You cannot imagine the beauty of the costumes and decorations: in a theatre like this one in Milan, every illusion is perfect. Imagine the

entire Place Grenette under cover, with the balconies curtained in taffeta of all colors, and the smallest loge the size of my bedroom in Grenoble. There are lighted candles in every box, tables and playing cards; and refreshments are often served for the ladies . . ."

But he felt at last that it was time to turn to more serious matters. His foot, as Captain Burelviller would have said, was in the stirrup, and he must leap into the saddle and ride out to make his fortune. The world spoke of nothing but "getting ahead." Well, he too would get ahead—but how?

His first step was to get transferred from the supply service, which was an inferior branch of the army, to the active service, which was the desirable branch. So much was simple enough: Pierre Daru, Secretary General in the Ministry of War said a word to the proper authorities, and young cousin Beyle was magically transformed into a Second Lieutenant in the Sixth Dragoons—black plumed hat and voluminous green cloak.

Having accomplished this, however, the new officer betrayed an original point of view about his professional life. He liked Milan: liked its gay atmosphere, its crowded streets, its fireworks and

balls, and its regular parade of carriages along the Corso di Porta Orientale; and he saw no points of attraction in a wartime barracks. So he stayed comfortably in the Milan offices and made only two visits to his regiment, which was at grips with the Austrians somewhere in the environs of Venice. The first time he spent about three weeks at the front and then disappeared for nine months. The second time he arrived only a few days before the armistice was signed between the French and the Austrians on April 16, 1801, like a tardy guest reaching the party after the candles are blown out and the other guests gone. Fortunately, he had time to take part in a battle before Castel Franco, in which he charged the enemy with coolness, captured cannon, and demonstrated great natural courage—or so it said on a handsome certificate which he caused to be procured for himself later. As a matter of fact, he had almost no fear of risking his life: his great, permanent fear was always that of being bored.

He still wanted to "get ahead" but he wanted to achieve his success by the most agreeable means possible. General Michaud, who was amused by the lad's impudence, offered to make him his aide-

de-camp; and Henri lost no time in accepting the offer. Milan saw him no more: he deserted his office and his patron Pierre Daru and galloped over the roads of Lombardy, Venice and Tuscany, following his chief like a shadow, with his cloak and plume floating back in the wind. His superiors tried to recall him, and threatened him with the rules forbidding second lieutenants to usurp the prerogatives of full-fledged Ordnance Officers: but he managed to elude them for some time.

All things come to an end, and Beyle finally had to rejoin the Sixth Dragoons at a little post in Piedmont. Military life was beginning to be dull again.

* * *

Ten thousand, a hundred thousand, have lived as long as Beyle, or longer, in the beloved country beyond the Alps without learning or wishing to learn anything about it, but Beyle was endowed by heaven with a restless, curious mind. He explored Italy completely with his restless glance and dogmatic judgment; too curious to miss anything, too intelligent to be easily misled, and too suspicious to surrender himself completely.

While doing so, he practised Italian and the

clarinet, in both of which admirable arts his progress was rather slow. "I would have liked to have taken two or three months more on the clarinet," he said, "and also on my Italian, to master them both: but I haven't time enough to make it worth while."

However meager his knowledge, he had boundless audacity, and ornamented his letters with exotic words; Pauline, to her delight, received one entirely in Italian. But he suffered from an unfortunate conviction that all that is necessary to turn French words into Italian is to end them in "a", "o", or "i" and struck an average of one mistake a word.

The clarinet was almost as much of a trial to him. He finally dismissed the Head Bandsman of the 91st Infantry to whom he had confided the honor of instructing him in that redoubtable instrument, and with a sigh renounced the study of music and languages alike.

He hesitated for a long time between a dual ambition to be a great captain like Turenne or a great writer like Molière; but finally inclined toward the latter, and set to work to study the Italian theatre. He nourished a conviction that

authors like Gozzi and Goldoni might very well supply ideas and characters to a young Frenchman who experienced a certain amount of difficulty in inventing them for himself; and that there could be no possible harm in employing them —ever so cautiously. The public, *his* public would never know the difference: for there was, of course, only one country in the world where genius could come into its own to the admiration of the universe—France; and only one place in which to become the successor to Voltaire—Paris.

He also observed Italian nature, and grew interested in landscapes. He felt completely at peace in the richly luxuriant Lombard plain; pleased at the panorama of Bergamo, girt with mountains on the horizon; and so overcome with emotion before the Borromean Islands that he actually blushed with pleasure.

But none of his comrades ever suspected his interest in stage or scenery. They would have laughed at his delight in those sweet, melancholy places which no Frenchman can describe, and which the English call "romantic." He dreamed and sighed and felt emotion surge in his heart:

and locked it carefully deep within him. He had early learned to guard his sensitivity.

The natives of Italy next engaged his attention. Only madmen and idiots despise all those not of their own country; only the ignorant invoke the name of Rome in season and out of season, and minimize the rest of Italy. Beyle, on the other hand, heard all the evidence carefully, and if it was contradictory, hesitated and reserved judgment.

He early discovered a few certainties. The Italians in Milan, for instance, were vastly superior to the ignorant French idea of them. Certain Milanese were possessed of the highest type of wisdom and honor. The lower classes, on the other hand, the soldiers he met in the war, were little better than animals. They managed to unite the ignorance of the French peasant with the added evils of treacherous hearts, miserable cowardice and detestable fanaticism.

Little wonder, said Beyle, that impiety was born in Italy: the best of religions would make itself despised through such protagonists. The Grand Vicar of Venice, for instance, issued a ridiculously violent bulletin on the subject of the French.

It stated, among other things, that cows whose milk was drunk by Frenchmen would shortly fall dead; that vines whose wine they drank would wither; that houses where they lodged would be struck by lightning. It was absurd, of course, but not to be laughed off when the inhabitants took it seriously: when soldiers could not leave their company for fear of being shot from tree or cottage, and when the hussars of the Tenth Regiment found the village curate in the act of setting fire to the farms where they were billeted.

Italy varied from day to day in Beyle's mind. Sometimes it was an ideal country, and the only place to live; sometimes it was a detestable country, and he wanted to escape from it as soon as possible. Sometimes even Grenoble shone by comparison.

The one sure impression left upon him was that Italians were a violent people. What magnificent angers! What superb hates! What delightfully casual shedding of blood! They never hesitated to plunge a knife into their neighbor's back if they felt an impulse to. The number of murders committed in the course of a year in a little city like Brescia was incredibly high: twice as high, in

proportion, as the number in Paris, which, of course, was the center of all the corruption in the world. Murders, remember: not duels, or suicides, but frank, open assassinations.

The French, in short, led rather dull lives compared to the Italians. And who, said Beyle, would have believed it?

* * *

Beyle's comrades, all volunteer captains and lieutenants, were not chocolate soldiers. They were fearless on a campaign, and good sports off duty. They liked a rough joke or a broad story, drank deep, ran after a skirt whenever they saw one, and told long, incredible stories of their startling success with all manner and kind of women.

Young Beyle naturally hastened to model himself after them. He talked as much as any four, condescended to some, affected the vulgarities of others, and adopted a cynical, leering expression to cover his pitiful inexperience. He was soon a leading spirit in their nocturnal excursions, thought up new and ingenious practical jokes, and sang their exploits in verse worthy of a more experienced rake. He even fought a duel, as he had long wished to. To see and hear him you would

have taken him for the most dissolute debauchee —and he was, as a matter of fact, exactly the opposite.

For as soon as he was in his own room, or out in the country away from his comrades, he forgot to act and dropped the mask. He fell into a day-dream, sighed, despaired and wept. He dreamed exquisite dreams. His heart was empty, and ached to love someone. Who would accept his humble worship? He offered it in all humility to his guardian angels. The pretended roué was in reality a poor fool who longed for broken hearts and sacrifices and vows of eternal love.

But the nearer any wish lay to his heart, the more earnestly he always concealed it. Most of all, he hid his naive sentimentality; and from being thus suppressed, it grew ten times stronger, until he could never be alone without finding an escape into a romantic dream world from which he awoke to crises of black misery.

Oh, for a chivalrous adventure! Oh, to have a carriage drive by; to have the horses take fright, the carriage overturn, and a girl of dazzling beauty scream within as Henri Beyle leaped for-

ward to save her from a horrid death! Oh, for a hundred other pictures, even more alluring!

He would have died of shame had his companions ever suspected his secret thoughts. He shuddered to think of their jokes, their shouts of laughter.

And yet he hated them even more for not realizing his misery and his secret need. They knew life; they knew how one goes about the conquest of beauty; they had already possessed ten times as many women as they desired, as they frankly admitted. Why couldn't they have found one of those superwomen who must exist somewhere in the world for their friend Beyle? To such an Angelica, to such an Armide, he would have revealed the inner secrets of his soul, cast off the veil of callousness, and spent with her a lifetime of devotion and exaltation.

He might have been brilliant, he thought, with such a woman to love him. He might have found means to enrich his mind, and to deserve her esteem, cultivated such virtuosity and profundity as to leave all his detested rivals in the shade. He might have been as virtuous as he was cultivated.

But no such happy events befell. Life went its

banal way, without glory or adventure; months passed, and his adolescent state of mind became a habit. He was constantly obsessed with vain, sweet visions. Henri sighed before his own image and thought of Henri with "poignant melancholy." Henri felt for Henri a "tender pity."

Ten years later he remembered those sad, childish times when he came back to Lombardy, and spoke wistfully of "those two years of sighs, tears, love and melancholy I spent in Italy."

One of Henri's superwomen lived right there in Milan: a woman capable of easing all his torment, had she but wished to. Among all the ghosts in that period of Henri's life, she alone takes form before us.

Her name was Angela Pietragrua, and to all the world but Henri, she was a good-humored, agreeable woman, with easy, indulgent manners, daughter of the proprietors of a small dry goods shop, and wife of a clerk singularly free from conjugal jealousy. She was comfortably plump, with a generous Italian figure, and a generous Italian disposition; and she extended her generosity to the officers of the French army in Italy, and espe-

cially to one ox-necked vulgarian named Joinville, as was well known to all the town.

But to Beyle, Angela Pietragrua was a goddess. She dazzled him. She was proud and majestic, with a grace of manner unequaled among mortals. Her black hair was a crown on a regal head. Her brilliant eyes were tokens of a passionate heart and a high-poised spirit, eager for love.

He felt the full misery of his position when he tried to pay homage to his goddess. The situation seemed to demand a little encouragement on her part, however slight: and that encouragement was completely lacking. To Angela, Henri was one of a large crowd of soldiers, always hanging around her: his only distinguishing trait was that he was heavier and awkwarder than most. She called him the Chinaman, perhaps because of his high cheekbones and narrow eyes, and cast him for a part in the chorus of the performance, not for the leading rôle. Joinville was secure in that, for the moment, and should he grow tiresome there was always another, such as Mazeau or Auguste Pietet, either of them more romantic than the Chinaman. She was well surrounded, was Angela, with

those mad, amusing, generous foreigners called Frenchmen.

And so Angela Pietragrua, the divine, ignored her humble, inarticulate suppliant whose inner life was naught but anguish, melancholy and despair.

* * *

Toward the end of the ninth year of the Republic, 2nd Lieutenant Beyle, Sixth Dragoons, was forced to leave his General and his delightful post and rejoin his regiment at Bra in Piedmont. He lingered a few days in Milan, kept there as by a magnet, and then crossed Pavia, Voghera, Tortona, Marengo, Allesandri and Asti—gloomy cities and sites, for he saw them all through gloomy eyes.

He dreaded the life he was going to find in Bra. There would be hunting, of course, occasionally, in the morning; lunch at the officer's mess, with eternal talk of advancement and the service, and the same eternal anecdotes from the presiding officer whoever he might be; a hundred points at billiards in the afternoon, and then a hundred more to get his revenge; and then back to his dreary room till dinner time.

It was as bad as he had feared. The only varia-

tion in the monotony came when they announced that the regiment was ordered from Bra to Saluzzo. Beyle asked if the new garrison would be more amusing. Perhaps, they said: rumor had it that there were two billiard tables there instead of one.

Beyle fled when the month of Nivose came to silver over the neighboring Alps. He was done with considerations of common sense, with his career, with his ambition. No more green mantles or flowing plumes for him: they led only to barrack room billiards. He applied for, and received, a permit to go on leave which was equivalent to a dismissal. Pierre Daru, already annoyed at his lightheaded ways, was angrier than ever: Beyle left him to his anger, washed his hands of his lieutenancy and of Saluces, Piedmont and all Italy. He wanted to go, and he went.

He started back along the road to France, most decidedly not the traveler who leaves a beloved country and dashes a tear from his eye as he goes. Beyle hastened hot foot toward Grenoble, where home and family waited for him. He was lost and ill; fever had shaken him for months and he could not seem to throw it off. The slightest imprudence

brought it on again, and he finally consulted the army doctor.

"You take mercury for it," he said. "Here, take these pills. And don't worry: you're not the only one . . ."

He brought back only vague memories of Italy: vague memories, and incompatible, even contradictory ones. Italy as a whole was still largely unknown to him, and he consequently refrained from judging it too arbitrarily. Italy to him was only the recollection of his dreams, of his vain complaints, of his unanswered cries. Italy was not a real place: it was only the symbol of his suffering. A few books, cast aside with a marker between the pages. A few characters: surprising, half-understood characters. The languishing sweetness of a song. The passionate grace of Cimarosa's *Matrimonio Segreto.* Milan, an oasis. *La Scala,* a sublime theatre. And Angela Pietragrua, whom he had not dared to love.

CHAPTER IV

"M. Beyle is Trying to Be a Great Man. . . ."

THERE had been a misdeal in the game of life, and the hand had to be played over again—that was all. Beyle considered the situation, and redealt the cards with all the serious judgment of a wise man of eighteen. "I have made one mistake," he said, "and I can't afford to make any more. My whole life is at stake."

But the only thing certain in his mind, was that Grenoble was a singularly dreary city. Pauline was a darling, and worthy to understand even her brother's superior soul; but she was the only one of the kind around. The rest of the family were unbearable: even Grandfather Gagnon was getting old, and told interminable stories of the good old times. As for Cherubin, he was a miser who actually begrudged his only son a pension—and that when said son had just come back from Italy and had his way to make in the world. It was a crabbed family and a provincial town for a young

intellectual, and Beyle decided that Paris alone beckoned to genius.

"Paris," said Beyle profoundly, "is the one place in the world where one can live one's own life." There could be no constraints in Paris. Paris spelled liberty.

When he came to consider further the question of his future, he came to rather negative conclusions. Trades and callings of any sort, were quite out of the question: ordinary people might not see anything repellent in them, and yet the point was perfectly obvious to Beyle: he would never dream of accepting a contract which handed him his daily bread and at the same time snatched away his liberty. He would never barter his beloved independence for a handful of silver. He would live on a crust if needs be, but he would live freely. Nor would the army ever see him again if he could help it; and as for the civil service, he scorned it. He was a republican, and no republican could condescend to do business with the First Consul, the man who killed the Republic. Only a few days before, Napoleon had ridden through the streets of Paris on his white charger, cheered by the

people, and smiling his theatrical smiles in return. Charlatan! cried Henri.

If he could only keep his freedom, life would be so pleasant. All France had come to a new Renaissance and begun life once more, as Henri wished to. The very sun shone brighter than it had a few years before. Jacobins clasped the hands of aristocrats, and aristocrats smilingly saluted their long lost homes. The bourgeois were once more chatty and sociable. The soldiers threw out their chests, twirled their mustaches and told tales of their campaigns like true heroes. Even the merchants, now that their merchandise sold for stable money, began to smile again. The changing cycle of the years brought back brocades and swords, and luxury and pleasure.

The Palais Royal, hub of the earth, was thronged all the time. Society wandered from the Café de la Rotonde to the gambling rooms in the Gallery where they tossed away their nice new napoleons; or else they strolled a bit around the Tuilleries, adventured out to the Champs Élysées, or drove to Ranelagh to dance that new shameless three time waltz. And every evening they ate ices *à l'italienne* under the foliage of Frascati, or,

as winter fell, made the round of the famous salons quite in the old style.

Beyle could not but find it pleasant to mingle in that life: to lounge, idle and strut among them. It was pleasant to be his own master and his own servant; pleasant to dream in the sky and walk on earth only to taste its pleasures; pleasant to be inferior to no one and to admire himself with delightful candor, to find, without too much surprise, that he was as handsome, if not more handsome than any man in town. He cut a fine figure in those days in his nankin trouser, his multi-striped waistcoat of swansdown, his moorshead coat, his bronze whipcord outfit, and his walnut brown cloak. He was all that was elegant in his tiered carrick. And he was supreme of an evening, dressed for a party in silk stockings, leathern trousers, triple ruffle and poetic crest of hair.

He was the perfect dandy—or at least he tried to be. Copied all their airs: walked with conscious grace, carried his head like an indolent swan, learned to dance, and lost no opportunity to show his well-turned leg, of which he was enormously proud. He made frantic efforts to lose his Gren-

oble accent, which was a great trial to him and avoided all homely words like *"père"*, *"mère"*, *"bêtise"* and *"inconveniensse."* He grew insolent with men, over-anxious with women, and carefully careless in his manners. He was more vain than shrewd, always alive to insult, always ready to take offense at a fancied slight, always oversensitive. Not everybody is fitted to be a lion in the Paris salon, and Beyle was a little too intelligent to be successful.

* * *

The stalls in the Comédie Française, the final tribunal of all art, were filling up again, and the habitués sauntered in one by one, commenting with relief upon the fact that the times had changed and that, thank God, no one would have to sing the *Carmagnole* between the acts—or even, as once under the Convention when patriotism needed refreshing, in the middle of an act. Nor would there be much probability of a duel with canes, royalist against republican, as under the Directoire. The Tragic Muse again reigned calm and supreme under the guardianship of an Emperor who loved pure art. Overjoyed to be in their accustomed places once more, on the left or the

right, in the second or third row—but not in the fourth, which would have been too humiliating—they gathered again to exercise their artistic dictatorship.

The gods of the hereafter in antique times were less severe in their judgments than those courteous old men, who yet recalled the day when they were witness to the last days of Voltaire, and spoke through tears of his apotheosis. Their thoughts ran together in well-grooved channels, and they drew even closer together to form the taste of any newcomer among them, and ingrain in him respect for the three classic French unities: time, place and action. Every evening, rows of faces turned expectantly toward the stage, and heads whose thoughts comprised the most critical spirit of France and Navarre leaned forward to catch every word. Woe to the dramatist who showed any disrespect for his audience by attempting to circumvent one of the sacred unities: he received nothing but murmurs, boos and whistles for his pains.

Beyle took his place among the gallery gods, and was as faithful to the play each night as on a field of honor, devouring each successive offering

with a voracious appetite, from *Agamemnon* and *Sganarelle,* through *Dido,* the *Three Sultans, Oedipus* and the *Ungracious Lover.* Sometimes he put on his hat and walked out in disgust; but no matter how often he did so, the ticket seller always saw him back at the window the next night. What plays he could not see, he always managed to read. He studied English under a Franciscan monk in order to read Shakespeare in the original and rushed to Cailhava's at an unearthly hour to buy his *Art of Comedy.* Cailhava never knew whether his nocturnal customer was a devoted admirer, a practical joker or a madman. As if that were not enough to keep him busy, he studied declamation, first under Larive and later under Dugazon: he worked like Orestes pursued by all the furies. He got to know some actors, saw the great Talma, and was allowed in the dressing room of the incomparable Mlle. Duchesnois, whom he defended loyally against Mlle. George and her cabal.

For M. Henri Beyle intended to be a great man, and had set out to build his life according to a preconceived plan. He found, after self-analysis, that his dearest dream was glory: his life

was designed with the one purpose of achieving it.

Corneille, Racine and Molière watched him from their place in the pediment of the Louvre, opposite his lodgings, and seemed to beckon to him. "And what is my purpose?" he wrote at this time. "To win myself the fame of the greatest of French poets, not by intrigue like M. Voltaire, but by truly deserving it; and in pursuance of that ambition, to instruct myself in Greek, Latin, English and Italian."

It was, you see, a perfectly clear, simple ambition.

He labored at it as obstinately as a donkey, and about as intelligently. It never occurred to him that it was not necessary to know everything in the world. It never occurred to him that not everyone can compose masterpieces after sufficiently studying the rules of the art. He believed that the old masters had tucked away in their works some infallible secret for literary success, and that all their descendants had to do was dig it out again. And he believed that the critics, since they so often discussed that secret, must know all about it, and could reveal it to him. And most of all he

believed, quite seriously, that he was born for the sole purpose of writing comedies, and comedies in verse.

So his days were spent doubled over his desk, hour upon weary hour, invoking Alexandrins which arrived on eleven or thirteen feet, and invoking rhymes which never arrived at all. The masterpiece which was to bring him eternal glory was called: *'Le Tellier, ou les Deux Hommes.'* Time and time again he abandoned it, only to take it up again. Time and time again he was plunged into anger or despair.

But he drove himself doggedly to the task, reopened the notebook at the page he had just finished, and set to work once more.

Perhaps he had reached the moment of pathos, when Adèle the heroine was soliloquizing:

Adèle:

Ah, does his love yet live? May hope dwell in my heart?
Though on this very night forever we must part,
Though to a marriage vile his mother forces me,
And in his soul he fears I follow joyfully?

Ah, when he saw me here, what happiness, what
fire!
Attentions all too kind affection did inspire!
Can infidelity by absence then be thus imparted—

that line seemed a trifle long, to be sure, but he would go back to it later: no use being too critical at first—

Can infidelity by absence then be thus imparted,
And does he, love forgot, seduce cold hearted?
Unhappy me! Without him, love is lost indeed.
Heavens! Into what pit does fate my footsteps
lead?
He comes but to achieve a vengeance all too plain,
For that pretended scorn whose presence was his
pain,
To paint for me a love he can no longer feel.
Ah, fly ; no rather by my pride reveal—

a word missing there, but he would have to let it go for the moment—

no rather by my pride reveal
The final death of all those cowardly visionings.
Heavens! He comes . . .

A good place to stop and a very satisfying result, thought Henri: he rarely managed so many lines in a day. He put the book away and went out to dinner.

* * *

But if you had delved even farther into his thought, and, not content to follow his stumbling pen through the maladroit *Tellier,* had realized the depths of Henri's ambition, you would have seen that it did not stop short at mere triumphs in the theatre, and that his desired apotheosis in that line was only an inferior sort of apotheosis to the ones he expected. He was elaborating a strange doctrine designed to assure him an exact and scientific knowledge of all the laws of being and the underlying principles governing humanity. He was drawing as far as possible apart from the herd: he intended to be a great man and dominate life instead of drifting blindly down its current. He intended to know the human mind and soul so thoroughly that it should become his plaything. As the months went on, his critical spirit tore down, evolved and strengthened a philosophy of life on which to base his entire future. Said he:

"The heavens above are empty. None of the

gods created by man exist; no mystery draws a veil around us. Reason puts to flight the terrors born of fear. Life has its beginning and its end on earth. Who knows whence we came? After we have gone, we plunge again into nothingness. Men know no law save their own interest: they call those actions virtuous which are useful to them; and those which harm them, wrong. A few institutions and a few beliefs established by men give society its apparent—and its one—stability. If it were not for fear of criticism, for fear of authority, or for fear of hell, men would obey nothing but their own passions. Such is humanity; and any history which paints another picture of it is false; and any historian who traces pompous pageants of its splendors, and draws from them a proof of a moral system, is a liar and a rogue. Yet such is the universal system of hypocrisy that men, whether through lack of sense or lack of knowledge, will not open their eyes to the truth, and desire only to be misled.

"I am not akin to them. I need neither consolation nor hope. My happiness lies in observing facts; bare, ungarnished facts. Error is never pleasing; truth always beautiful. My passion in

life is to trace out the interplay of human emotions in the depths of human souls. My ambition is to be numbered among the wise and the strong who find their keenest pleasure in the clear-eyed knowledge of reality . . ."

'There is no reality save that of the senses, no higher order than the human':—such were increasingly his convictions as the days went on. One of the greatest discoveries of his life was that, in 1804, he found a system of philosophy which seconded and furthered his own efforts by giving him a ready-made scientific basis for the study and knowledge of reality.

"This science," he wrote, "to which our lives are dedicated; this scarecrow built to frighten tyrants, this science so detested by every sort of charlatan, is in its essentials the most childishly simple system in the world. We call it Ideology: 'ideo,' meaning idea, and 'logy' a discourse, and the whole word therefore signifying a discourse on ideas. Locke, I believe, discovered it in 1720, Condillac gave it body in 1750, and Destutt de Tracy brought it to its present perfection two years ago . . ."

Ideology became his religion. "Have you read

Condillac?" he said. "Have you read the great work of Helvetius entitled *Spirit,* which is the missal of the wise? Have you read Cabanis? Destutt de Tracy? They are quinine for the mind. Together they compose a whole school of thoughtful men who have devoted their entire lives to the study of philosophy: and what have they found? That nothing exists outside of the realm of experimental facts proceeding from an original fact: that the mind is a blank page on which successive phenomena are inscribed, awakening sensations, developing faculties, and little by little forming the whole human machine. Ideology explains the source and destiny of mankind beyond possibility of doubt: the vague flights of metaphysics are completely inadmissible in it. Thanks to Ideology, you can observe the mechanism of the soul like that of an open watch, and study the functioning of anger, ambition or love. Have you read Tracy?"

If you had gone into his sordid room, in those days, you might easily have surprised him in the act of placing a patch—carefully darkened with ink—in the crack of his worn out shoes; or considering the depressing fact that his wardrobe

had gone, piece by piece; and that Cherubin, after promising him three hundred francs a month, was sending two hundred, or sometimes one hundred and fifty, or sometimes nothing at all; and that he owed his boarding house, his lodgings, his porter and his tailor—who lay in wait for him all day; and that he had long since pawned his watch.

He no longer could afford to go out, and neglected not only the Darus, but even Mlle. Duchesnois. The last time he dined out he had to invent an excuse and leave early—if he had stayed, they might have asked him to see some lady home, and he was much too poor to hire a carriage. His entire worldly possessions consisted of twenty-five sous and a chronic fever.

And yet, far from being cast down or despairing, he was in the best of spirits. He felt himself lord of all he beheld, for he was beginning to be possessed of true wisdom, and had only a lofty scorn for the successful charlatans who grew rich by preying on human hypocrisy. He felt a still loftier scorn for the idiots they exploited: idiots, however well meaning, made him ill. He was thankful to be rid of the putrid atmosphere of deceit in which they lived, thankful to raise him-

self above the level of rogues and fools alike. He soared above them on the wings of Ideology.

He was not, however, as unworldly as that implies. He expected eventually to find great compensations for his theoretical wisdom, and was quietly convinced that a day would come when he would no longer be content to dominate the herd from an abstract standpoint, but would exploit them as was only fair. The musician who knows the strings of his harp and touches the sharps and flats at will, can move his audience as he wishes. The necromancer who knows the workings of a manikin and the springs controlling its arms and legs can make it play tricks like a Vaucanson. And in the same way, said Henri, the man who knows the inmost workings of the human soul, and the springs controlling ambition, vanity, desire and envy, can sway mankind at will. An expert Ideologist, once he learned to play on the harpsichord of men's passions, could direct all life to suit himself.

The old-fashioned type of conqueror dominated men by brute force. Henri decided his method would be fresher and infinitely more elegant. After a certain amount of practice he would be

able to use spiritual carom shots, so to speak, and make men enslave themselves: a game combining pleasure and profit, and with infinite possibilities. Once he had learned all there was to know about human beings, the poor young man with the cracked shoes intended to be the master of the world and of the science of good and evil, and have people of their own accord come to him and lay their treasures at his feet.

He organized and correlated his observations and theories every day, year after year, working at what he called his second education: observing himself, and observing others; classifying and comparing.

When he grew tired of monologues, he wrote Pauline. Pauline was his only confidante, his ambassadress to Cherubin or Grandfather Gagnon, his trusty comrade ready to understand anything, and, best of all, his provincial little sister, always a little in awe of her Parisian brother, who knew the great Talma, always ready to be his pupil and follower. Her only fault was that her energy was not as great as her willingness. A happy and invincible laziness kept Pauline from the assiduous reading her brother recommended to her and

saved her from the itch to write. It was very pleasant for Henri: he could give her the same advice ten times without her tiring of it, for she never acted on it; and giving her advice was what Henri most enjoyed doing. All he asked of her was that she should listen.

In his moods of affection, he made much of her, and she was his 'dear little Pauline,' his 'little Lina,' his 'darling' and the 'dearest daughter of my heart, as your pet Ossian would say.' Or, in a playful way, he would temper his Parisian elegance with vulgar, friendly peasant phrases: 'You big idiot, you know perfectly well I'm right: try to deny it!' and 'Come on, you little pig, you're the laziest slut in seven counties, and not worth half the trouble I take with you. Drink some black coffee and sit up, for once, and read Ideology.' And then, again, in a different key. "I am sad, Pauline dear, and I come to you for consolation."

He did his best to model her in his own image, and sketched in the ideal character for her: that of a woman without illusions, absolutely sincere with herself, devoted to the truth however harsh the truth might seem and ready to take advantage of human stupidity—since that was part of the

game—to ensure her own happiness at any price.

"If anyone comes up to speak to you," he wrote, "you must ask yourself two questions immediately. One: what advantage does he hope to derive from speaking to me? Two: what advantage will he derive from speaking to me in these terms? —Never believe a word he says, unless his advantage should happen to lie in telling you the truth."

Next, she should inscribe the following rules of life in a conspicuous place where her eyes would be sure to fall on them:

"Do not be content with any action in proportion to the pleasure it gives you, but in proportion to its usefulness to you.

"The only art necessary for a woman to make her life completely happy—but an indispensable one—is the art of influencing others, without their knowing it, to do her will."

When it came to a husband, the easy-going Mante might do very well, for he was rich and handsome, and would never realize his own stupidity unless someone pointed it out to him. And how should she set about winning a husband? Not by sparkling and scintillating, not by revealing

the keenness of her wit on every occasion. Look at Madame de Stael, an exceptionally brilliant woman, in fact the very type of the exceptional woman—and deeply unhappy. Her case should be an example to all girls. Pauline should be modest and retiring, and cultivate a disarming mediocrity. Hypocrisy, usually a detestable vice, would in this case, said Beyle, be a legitimate means to an end.

"Be hypocritical," he wrote, "and learn to please . . . Cultivate hypocrisy. Persuade everyone you meet that you are happy only with him, that you value his opinion, and that a word of criticism from him would make you miserable.

"Take an example. Suppose you received a visit from a friend suffering from a double chagrin: the death of her canary, which the cat had just eaten, and the fact of having met Mlle. Tournadre on the street in a much smarter costume than her own. What would you do? Smile at her grief? No, on the contrary: pretend to be deeply touched by the untimely demise of the canary, and properly critical of the frivolous ways of Mlle. Tournadre. Your friend will be soothed, and sing your

praises everywhere. You can conquer the whole world that way, one person at a time."

So much for Pauline. But what was going to happen to the master of wisdom himself? Would he be a leader of men? A new Machiavelli? A superman?

At the very moment he boasted of having vanquished all illusions, one illusion, the most profound of all, listened, and laughed at him.

CHAPTER V

The Search for a Soul Mate

Victorine.

VICTORINE was in Grenoble when he first came back from Italy. The whole world seemed to have come back at the same time: soldiers, priests, emigrés—and M. Mounier, who had been teaching school in Weimar during his exile. Victorine was his daughter, and she played Haydn symphonies on the piano for Henri's delectation. She was his soul mate, whether she knew it or not, and he loved her.

But M. Mounier left shortly for Paris in search of a new position and took his musical daughter with him. Of all Henri's reasons for leaving Grenoble, her going was the most cogent. He followed close on their heels. Alas! the First Consul immediately appointed M. Mounier Prefect of Rennes, and Victorine was snatched away from Paris.

His soul mate was gone, and Henri, who had

vowed to pursue nothing in the world but his own interest; Henri, whose only faith was in the power of logic (pronounced lo-gic with a careful separation of the syllables) was left in Paris as pitiable a deserted lover as ever paced the streets.

He reread *Werther,* and saw his own story in it, and himself the French *Werther.* He reread *Delphine* and—aside from slight differences of sex—felt that he was *Delphine.* He wept all night beside his lamp, like any classic lover. He felt that no young man had ever been so completely miserable; and no young man ever victimized by a more perfidious fate.

He dreamed of Victorine Mounier in Rennes, and wondered what she was thinking, and in what meditations her noble soul was engaged. Perhaps she was dancing, or at the theatre. Perhaps—odious thought—she was surrounded by young fools trying to make love to her.

"How astonished she would be, walking some evening at fall of dusk, in the park," he wrote, "to see me lurking there among the trees!" Perhaps she would have been: but in spite of the comparative ease of going to Rennes from Paris, a vast terror of Victorine herself held him back. He

turned cold with fear at the very thought of avowing his love.

He had only one hope. Victorine had a brother named Edouard, and Henri knew him. He wrote Edouard, wrote at his wittiest, hoping that Edouard would mention the letter to his sister and speak of Henri's brilliance and his charm. When nothing happened, he wrote again, making use of the technique the officers of the Sixth Dragoons employed, and spoke casually of his successes in the salons, and his triumphs among women. According to all the rules of the game Victorine should have been jealous: and love, as everyone knows, is born of jealousy.

But his ingenious tactics remained without effect, and the pangs of love were all in vain. Months passed; a year; two years—and still Victorine gave no sign of life. Distance and time drew a veil across the image of the unfeeling beauty. One day a friend spoke of her as a 'fat, plain girl' and another blasphemous creature announced that she 'wasn't so much.' For a moment Beyle was distressed; but he was a faithful lover. Gone, distant and maligned, Victorine was still Victorine, and Henri's thoughts still hovered about her.

And then, one magic day in December, 1804, she returned to Paris, and Beyle screwed up his courage to the point of going to see her, under pretence of calling on the disappointing Edouard.

"Well, I saw her again, and said: 'Mademoiselle, permit me to salute you.' She made me a polite curtsy and made as if to leave the room. 'Is Edouard at home?' I added quickly. 'Yes, he is here,' she said—I think—and vanished. Victorine is certainly not a fat, plain girl. If she were ever fat, she has lost a great deal. She wore a straw hat *à l'allemande,* tied beneath her chin with a pair of blue ribbons. I wonder if she was embarrassed. For my part, I flatter myself that I looked as well as my face—which is to her merely another collection of features—permits: I wore a very handsome jabot, tie and waistcoat, and had my hair cut that very noon instead of letting it float artistically around my head as it usually does. I feel sure I produced that effect of Parisian elegance of which Edouard has doubtless spoken to her . . ."

He had not the courage to risk a second interview. He literally did not dare go back to the Rue du Bac, climb the De Germando's stairway to the

Mounier's apartment, meet Victorine face to face, and risk another speech as daring as 'Mademoiselle, permit me to salute you.'

It seemed infinitely easier to write, and after several days of effort and twenty attempts buried in the merciful obscurity of the wastebasket, he produced a letter of which he was not too much ashamed, and inscribed it on three large pages of vellum, in a script simulating printing. He then entrusted the result to the post, and sat down to await the final verdict of destiny.

Victorine never answered it.

Adèle.

Adèle was his cousin once removed. She was the daughter of Jean Baptiste Rebuffel, who kept a shop—and a mistress in an apartment above—in Rue Saint Denis; and a wife and daughter on one floor of the Daru house in Rue de Lille. Adèle was only fourteen in 1802, but she was a precocious child, gave Henri a lock of her hair, and kissed him on the stairway.

Unfortunately, it is always more intriguing to the masculine mind to have to penetrate a little reserve and capture a heart that is none too will-

ing. Great loves thrive only on great difficulties, setbacks, struggles, partial successes, and long-awaited victory. Sophisticated little Adèle was agreeable not only to Henri, but to Cousin Cardon, who was an offensive, effeminate little man and unworthy to be a rival to Beyle; and if Cardon was not there, her adaptable nature turned to Alexander Pietet, who was rich but stupid and smug.

Henri saw at last that Adèle would never be an Héloise, a superwoman. She was essentially an unfeeling little thing, egotistical and greedy, and more interested in making Adèle attractive than in appreciating the attractiveness of others. She could never understand the only good in life, true love.

Adèle for her part never suspected the thoughts that preoccupied Cousin Henri, who always bored her a little, those evenings when he watched quietly from a corner while she had her hair dressed before the mirror. She most certainly never suspected his verdict on her:

"It is excessively interesting for a man who has studied Lavater's theory of physiognomy and who has himself done a little research into the signifi-

cance of feature and expression, to watch the manner of a pretty woman at her dressing table when she does not realize she is being observed. It is the highest moment of her life, and she is completely herself: you can read her through and through. I did so: and in her face I saw only a deadened soul, a complete absence of any soft emotion, and cruelty."

It was a sweeping condemnation, but given perfectly tranquilly, without regret or anger, by a young judge who was always singularly clear-sighted once his eyes were no longer blinded with infatuation. He was not in the least angry with Adèle. On the whole he was grateful to her for the charming coquettishness she had wasted on him. And he always vowed that one of the most cherished memories he had was of the evening she leaned on his shoulder a moment, trustingly and almost tenderly, during the fireworks at Frascati.

Mélanie.

All the contradictory sides of Henri's character fought a battle when he bestowed his heart on Mélanie Louason.

He had often wondered whether he might not

find his long-sought Heloise among the women who frequented the salon at the Dugazons' theatre women, parading their charms or declaiming tragedy. He had often wondered whether she might not appear there, his cherished ideal: sweet and proud, hard to conquer and yet alluring; unselfish, ready to perceive honest worth and prefer it to wealth or beauty; sensitive and intelligent, wise and tender, realizing that it is not enough to be adored but that one must adore in return. He looked eagerly for her in Mlle. Rolandeau, in Mme. Lestrange, in little Felipe—and in Mélanie Louason.

Mélanie was an actress, and aspired like most actresses to the honor of playing tragedy at the Comédie Française. Henri was particularly pleased that she should be: for actresses, as everyone knows, shed a faint reflected glory on the men who are their lovers, and even faint glory is not to be disdained. Her profile was pure, verging on the severe, like a classic statue; and her every motion was graceful. Human imperfection being what it is, she was, perhaps, just a little thin, but that may have been the result of all her un-

happy experiences. For Mélanie had led a sad life; a very sad life.

"My mother," Mélanie used to say, "was an only daughter, and very beautiful, but so bad tempered that she often struck my father, who had to pretend to laugh at her ways. When he was dying and they wanted to call her to his bedside, he refused. 'No, please don't,' he said: 'Let me at least die in peace.' "

In addition to being so badly fitted out with parents, she had a brother, who was a thoroughly bad lot and a roué, though scrupulous about money matters. As for Mélanie herself, she had always been traduced by her enemies and betrayed by her friends, had been unhappy all her life, and had without any doubt been born exclusively for sorrow.

Henri fell in love with the tragic muse and all her troubles; and a dozen people immediately sprang to life within him. Some of them urged him on and rejoiced at his passion. There was the Man of a Thousand Books, who devoured love stories, and divided his affection between the *Portuguese Nun,* the *Letters of Abelard, Romeo and Juliet* and *Othello.* There was the Man of the

World who saw all his friends in pairs, hand in hand, and grew weary of being alone. There was the Obstinate Man determined—and why the devil not?—to seek out some sort of gallant adventure. There was the Author, dreaming of a fruitful union of acting and literary temperaments. There was the Feeling Man, the Tender Man, touched by Mélanie, and compelled to comfort those tearful eyes of blue.

But Henri had other people within him who were not so easily satisfied. His Distrustful and Cynical spirits urged him to be careful and go slowly. Why were her cheeks broken out? Was she healthy? In spite of her freshness she had gone from man to man for some years. Hoche, the editor of the *Publicist* and Saint Victor, the poetaster and the author of *Hope* had kept her; and Martial Daru flicked her with a riding crop as she recited *Phèdre* and treated her with the casualness one bestows only on the woman one has lived with. As for Blanc, Wagner and Chateauneuf, they pursued her still; and back of them hung the shadowy legion of unknown lovers, usually so much more numerous than the known. Was she by now capable of loving anybody? Was

she looking for a wealthy lover? If so, her choice was ironically bad.

Was she genuinely emotional? One day, speaking of her father, she seemed moved and twice touched her handkerchief to her eyes. The effect would have been perfect, said the Cynic, had there been any tears visible.

And, again, did Henri really love her himself? He noticed that when he was with her he never did one simple or natural thing and talked in curious, set sentences, like the actor Fleury at the Comédie.

Then there were the Timid and Inhibited Men within him, ever urging against decisive action, against irrevocable decisions. And finally there was the Coward, who left Mélanie at the foot of the stairway when he might so easily have gone up with her to her room, and who contented himself, after he was so sure of Mélanie, with little walks on the boulevard and little dinners for two, always telling himself that he would talk seriously with her Wednesday, or Friday, or the next time whenever that happened to be.

He expostulated in vain with all the weakling people within: "Won't you ever learn anything,

you coward?" he said. "All your vigor of character comes down to intensity of emotion. You have always mistaken your strong passions for strong will. You have no will at all when it comes to action: you are lord of any number of castles in Spain, but a helpless slave in the world of reality."

His morbid sensitiveness, which persisted throughout his life, was in danger of gaining complete mastery over him. Life to most men is a monotonous succession of jobs and days, of moderate pleasures and passing pains. But to Henri Beyle, life was one continual emotion from dawn till night. He was absorbed by a book, exhausted by a play, tremulous at a new idea, faint at a recollection. His pleasures were intensified a hundredfold, and his pains gargantuan. He was raised to the skies or plunged into the depths of despair by the manner in which a word was spoken, or the import of a half-completed gesture. He once made a very significant comment on this trait in himself:

"My doctors always looked at me with a fascinated interest when I was sick, as a perfect example of nervous irritability. An open window in the next room, with the door shut between, once

gave me a chill. The slightest odor—except bad ones—weakened my left arm and leg and made me dizzy."

Every contact was a shock to him and he shivered at mental draughts that passed unnoticed over thicker skins. A passing shadow made him shudder, and he jumped like a person in a high fever at any distant noise. His humiliations and chagrins were bitter, and his delights, however keen, were rare.

Mélanie began to take offense at a dilatory respect she could not understand. She had no way of realizing that to Beyle her conquest took on the proportions of a gigantic enterprise which terrified him. He was like a thoroughbred horse, starting at a dead leaf and transforming a bit of paper into a dreadful dragon. He reached the point where he was ill with emotion, and completely at the mercy of his own senses and imagination.

And then; "I have an engagement at last," said Mélanie, to someone else, but watching him out of the corner of her eye, "and I have just about decided to accept it. The terms are really excep-

tional. Six thousand five hundred for the season, at the Grand Theatre in Marseille."

Marseille! Beyle started at the word, and blessed a benignant providence. Marseille was exactly the place he himself wanted to go, though he had not dared to say so. For he had just about made up his mind to abandon the pursuit of glory, wisdom and love in Paris, turn to the more profitable pursuit of wealth, and found a bank with his friend Mante who had just gone down to Marseille to look the ground over.

After that, everything was settled in the twinkling of an eye. Mélanie went straight to Marseille to make her début in *Tancred,* and Henri set out by way of Grenoble, where he wanted to interest Cherubin in his financial projects, to join her there. The bank idea had not worked out well, but Mante had found him a place in a wholesale grocer's, Meunier et Cie., where he would work all day, and have the evenings free to hear Mélanie at the Grand Theatre. Once settled, they would set up housekeeping together, enjoy their happiness, and love each other for life.

Scene: Marseille, a Grocery Store.

Sunlight, rippling sunlight. Motion: gestures, running figures, shouts, songs, a perpetual charivari in the streets. The houses, thought Henri, must be deserted in the daytime and filled with exhausted humanity at night. The crowd surged endlessly by: merchants, clerks, sailors, turbaned Hindus, Turks in fezes, Chinese, stared at by all the rest. Hard-eyed women, blue shadows in their soft hair. A strange conglomerate smell of fish, fried cakes, onion and garlic—and now and then, a sea breeze washing the air clean and leaving a taste of salt on the lips. Ill-smelling gutters, offal, greasy papers, fish scales and orange peel—so much orange peel that oranges must have played a leading rôle in the diet of the Marseillais. Filthy side streets, a girl in a slip lounging in every door. Scattered in the midst of café and market stall, stately palaces of the rich. Gayety everywhere, and better than gayety, joy; and better even than joy, the sheer love of living. And at the very end of a wide avenue, thronged with people, a vast azure expanse where masts bobbed up and down and white sails shimmered.

Beyle was completely happy, except for the summer heat, when he settled in Marseille with Mélanie in August, 1805. He was the lover of the leading lady at the Marseille Theatre, and all the handsome youths who pursued her unsuccessfully knew that he was her lover.

As for Mélanie, nature, said Beyle, had never made a finer character. She was Madame Roland, but an improvement on Madame Roland for she had the rare delicacy of the artistic soul, and the enchanting tenderness of a character from Tasso. She had, like Beyle, longed to find a heart as feeling as her own, and it was only in despair of finding such a one that she had let herself become a prey to melancholia. And now, like Beyle, she needed only to learn to accustom herself to continual happiness. Life, said Henri, is beautiful.

September. Mélanie not only has a great soul, but a sublime soul. She has a daughter, relic of those dark days when she was the victim of man's ingratitude, and the child is now alone in the world. She shall be adopted and brought up as Henri's own child, and Cherubin can go hang if he raises any objections. It does seem curious, however, that such a sublime soul should continue

to be melancholy when she has no reason for being so. She is also beginning to be jealous, which is annoying.

October. Mélanie continues to be sublime—perhaps a little bit too sublime for a world which she continues to observe through a veil of melancholy. She really should try Ideology: a good dose of Cabanis and Destutt de Tracy would do wonders for her. But she has an obstinate idea that all books are hard to understand and silly. She is ailing physically as well as spiritually, and has a continual pain between the shoulders: the unfeeling brutes she knew before she met Henri have almost destroyed her. Pauline might help by writing her a nice, understanding letter to cheer her up.

January: However happy a man is, he is bound to have an average of seven or eight causes for annoyance in the course of a day. It is far better to accustom yourself to the idea of suffering than to pursue a visionary happiness. Life is inevitably sad.

February: Mélanie not only expects unhappiness: she runs to meet it. She could be unhappy

married to a Councilor of State with ten thousand a year. . . .

Life went decrescendo, in love and business alike.

The business part of it had been fascinating at first. You were busy from morning to night, in Meunier et Cie., if you did your job half way well, what with the Customs, the public weighing, the Bourse, the collection of debts, the correspondence to go over—stupid and badly written to be sure—the eau-de-vie to check up on; and sugars to be observed, going up or down, no one knew quite why, while molasses followed their example. Halcyon days! Days for working like ten men.

And then, a little later, business was at least useful in one way: it gave you a chance to observe men and their interesting stupidities for eight hours a day. You groaned the first two hours, but you took refuge in ideological observations the last six.

And then, finally, business was deadly beyond words. There was nothing to do all day, especially since Meunier et Cie. were having a hard time of it, what with the English blockade hold-

ing off sugar, coffee, cloves and cinnamon till they were not to be had for love or money.

Banking, after all, was the only profession worthy a superior man. Banking meaning vast speculations and world-shaking strokes of financial genius. But banking involves a certain amount of capital, and capital was lacking. Cherubin thought of his son clad in a butcher's apron and languishing at the feet of an opera singer, and was not inclined to undo the strings to his purse.

Decrescendo, decrescendo. Marseille had once been an amusing, animated city with a hint of adventure in the air: it grew duller day by day. It was a dusty, shadeless city, and no artist can be properly touched as the melancholy days of autumn come on without yellowing leaves to ponder over. As for the spectators at the Marseille Theatre, they talked and laughed so loud that a talented actress had no chance to demonstrate her skill before them, and had to take refuge in shouting louder than they could. Finally, and worst of all, the impresario went bankrupt and couldn't pay his troupe.

"There isn't a ghost of amusement here," wrote Beyle, "not even any society. The women

are all high-class courtesans and ask a good price for their charms; the men are business men with no conversation except business. They go bankrupt when they are bad business men and take up with the women when they are successful. What a place to live, after a few years of Paris! Forgive me: I am as depressing as an illness."

He had debts in Paris, in Marseille and in Grenoble. His last black suit had holes under the arms; his last blue suit was ragged; and he had no overcoat whatever. "I am afloat on a single plank —and the plank is beginning to decay."

His companion in misfortune terminated her engagement and returned to Paris, and Henri was depressed—and relieved. The firm of Henri Beyle and Mélanie Guibert, also called Louason, founded at Marseille for the purpose of trading in drama, groceries and happiness, had gone bankrupt in less than a year. Two liquidations followed. The first:

Mélanie Guibert to Henri Beyle
Paris, June 10, 1806

You have been promising for the last six weeks to answer my letters to-morrow—or maybe the day after to-morrow—or some-

time in the future when you are rid of the hour or moment of ennui that weighs upon you. I can quite understand your attitude, and I have no wish to hurry your decision. But I must and do ask you to face and consider some difficulties, which can escape your attention as long as you wish, but which I cannot be bothered with much longer.

I have already asked you to answer the following questions:

1. If, in case I could supplement the money your parents give you through my slight talent, you love me enough to sacrifice your hopes of fortune, should you have to choose between pursuing that fortune and myself.

2. If you will please weigh and ponder which of us has the more securely founded life, so that the other may abandon their own to it, and eliminate the necessity of our remaining apart.

3. If you are really weak enough, or if your love for me is weak enough, to sacrifice me to your parents' desires or to your own ambitious projects.

4. Finally, if it is your intention to spend your life with me and keep it dedicated to me whatever happens; and if you will tell me, as a gentleman should, after sufficient reflection, whether such is your considered wish; and if you will admit the contrary frankly if it is not.

My peace of mind is wrapped up in this

> explanation. I assure you again of my loyal devotion and genuine tenderness; I have already given you sufficient proofs of both, and you have replied only with vague letters, saying that you love me, that you still love me, and that I will realize it two weeks from now when I see you again. All of that means only that when we meet you will make love to me a great deal, and swear you adore me, and that you live again now you are with me, and all that sort of thing. That may seem like a great deal to you, but I am afraid it has very little real meaning to me, especially when I consider your conduct as a whole, and your character as a whole; it cannot prove to me that you love me as I wish you to and as I must be loved if I am ever to be happy and at peace. And that is why I beg of you to be frank with me. . . .

You cannot help admiring Mélanie when she writes so decisively to her irresponsible lover and shows courage enough to force an issue when he would neither love her nor leave her. Henri was still a novice in the art, so much practiced by great men, of making the woman he loved unhappy for life, but he was making great strides in that direction, and had already joined the legion of those who can no longer love when they are sure they are themselves beloved.

The other liquidation was a more laborious process. Beyle found life duller than ever once he was alone: he had got used to companionship. Ennui and poverty combined to break his independence, and drive him back to the fold. He wrote Pauline, and Pauline went to Grandfather Gagnon as ambassadress; and Grandfather Gagnon in his turn, having a weakness for unworthy Henri, sat down and wrote an old fashioned epistle to Pierre Daru, beautifully phrased, a little affected, and dried carefully by hand with gold dust.

He assured Pierre Daru that Henri had never ceased to feel the liveliest gratitude toward his benefactor; that the blame for his generally light conduct lay in his tender age; that Henri to be sure had once abandoned a military career, but that the fault for that lay with himself, Doctor Gagnon, and with Cherubin, both of whom had, unfortunately, from force of habit, no affection for a military career; that the years in this case, as in so many others, would inevitably ripen the character of a young man who was not vicious at heart; and finally that he would guarantee Henri's future sedateness and success.

As for Henri himself, though he dared not beard Pierre Daru, he screwed up enough courage to lay siege to Martial, who had often spoken knowingly of the charms of actresses in the old days in Milan and would probably not be too severe with amorous sinnings. A minor job in the Comptroller's Office, now under Pierre Daru's brilliant direction, was Henri's highest ambition, and he wrote Martial to that effect. "If you are looking for a man to work ten hours a day," he said, "here he is. He has, I think, no need to assure you of his constancy should he be with you, and he asks but two years of trial to prove him."

He came back to Paris in pursuit of his ambition, to be met with reproaches from his entire family, including Adèle Rebuffel who could not understand his taste for actresses. He went much to the theatre, read Hobbes, Helvetius and Destutt de Tracy, made a pilgrimage to Montmorency to see Jean Jacques Rousseau's house, and felt ennui steal over him again.

And then the King of Prussia declared war on His Imperial Highness, the Emperor of the French. The trumpets of glory sounded and enthusiasm flamed high. Articles in the newspapers

described how a cannoneer in Vincennes died of sheer chagrin that he could not go, and how chasseurs in the infirmary at the École Militaire jumped out of windows to rejoin their regiments. The family decided that Henri's penance had lasted long enough, and the campaign would be his liberation: he would go with the rest. Martial would help him over the first stages of the road, and once in Germany he would have unlimited opportunities to improve himself. On October 29, 1806, he was made provisional assistant in the Commissary Division.

CHAPTER VI

The Tyrant War

HENRI knew long forced marches with no time out for rest, sleep snatched in granaries, and starts made through cold gray dawn with hay clinging to his hair. He went through anonymous cities, and glimpsed faces that peered after him, while he had not time to look again. He sent Pauline his itinerary: Metz, Hombourg, Mainz, Frankfort-on-the-Main, Hanau, Aschaffenburg, Wurtzbourg, Werneck, Munnerstadt. He was going to join the army and the Emperor, going like an automaton, and his mind, for once, found no time for introspection or observation—"the poor thing had to sleep through it." But it was not unpleasant to drift thoughtlessly after so many emotional upheavals; pleasant to forget his cares, forget to plan or reckon, and have the responsibility for his fate in other hands. As long as the war should last, he would be plaything of destiny.

He came to Berlin, built on the sand, and to the

Spree, whose waters were the color of green oil. And then his detachment received word to halt and garrison the city of Brunswick.

The business of war began in earnest. There were levies to raise, forms to fill out, papers to sign, generals to receive, troops to billet—snatched moments of leisure and nights of work. There were inevitable difficulties with the home Ministry: the enemy were no problem at all compared to the French.

There were occasional off days when he could amuse himself, and his masculine vanity was nourished by a handsome uniform and a string of horses, and by the profound bows and *'monseigneur'* of the Germans, and the *'Monsieur l'Intendant'* of the French.

Brunswick was not a handsome city, but it was amusing to Henri, with its wooden houses and official buildings, all in that dreadful Gothic style, and it was pleasant and friendly. A German who struck up a friendship with Henri and who became what he described as 'his only friend in the *ja* language,' has left us a description of their life at the time:

"The city of Brunswick presented an extraor-

dinary appearance in the beginning of the year 1807," says Strombeck in his *Recollections*. "Life was gayer than ever during the French occupation. The Governor had his headquarters in the ducal chateau, and the Supervisor, Martial Daru, was installed in the Bever palace. Gala dinners and balls filled every evening, and the local nobility vied with each other to offer their hospitality to the French authorities. Even the young women seemed only too ready to forget that the French were our enemies, and decked themselves in their best: we turned our unexpected visitors into guests. And it must be admitted that they in their turn performed their odious functions with the greatest humanity. Supervisor Martial Daru was particularly to be commended in this connection.

. . .

"But I happened to be much better acquainted with his near relation, Adjutant de Beyle, a young Grenoblois: indeed, I might say that we were close friends. He was at that time a man of about twenty-six, well versed in the sciences, and gifted with a completely Gallic vanity coupled with the most charming sociability. He called on me every day, rode horseback with me, and visited my country

house. We went to the Harz and up the Brocken together, and he watched over the interests of my princess with a care almost equal to my own: any advice he gave always proved itself justified. . . ."

Strombeck calls him 'de Beyle'; and his use of the particle is not by respect nor error. Beyle himself had adopted the 'de' and quietly ennobled himself when he entered Germany. 'De Beyle' sounded much better to strangers than 'Beyle' and distinguished him immediately from the herd.

His leisure hours were his own and he had no trouble in finding amusement. He played piquet and billiards, shot a pistol, hunted, rode dashingly beneath the windows of the Brunswick belles, and even sang in glees. He mixed in the best society and might have been observed in company with His Honor the Judge, the Master of the Hounds, His Honor the Councilor of State, and his Honor's wife.

A certain General von Griesheim, once a favorite of the Duke of Brunswick, and disgraced with him by the Emperor, had a daughter, a slim, gay, ash blonde daughter named Wilhemina. Henri was a bit enamored of her at one time,

and was decisively rejected by her, not without some hurt to his pride, though without lasting hurt to his heart, which turned to stocky little Charlotte Knabelhuber in a more prosaic, earthly fashion. Then there was a little party from time to time: three cups of tea, an agreeable woman, quick wit and fired imagination. But that sort of thing was dangerous, and Henri was careful not to presume upon it.

Fate had thrown him with the race of Germans, and like a good Ideologist, he set to work to study them and place them in their proper subspecies of the genus humanum.

Their leading quality, he decided early, was their profound righteousness. They loved women, but they did not usually deceive them. They were sincere and honest. In addition to their honesty, they were learned: though Parisians would hardly believe it, more books were printed every year in Germany than in France.

And yet after he had admired them for those qualities, he came back inevitably to their one capital fault: their lack of distinction. Either the Germans had deteriorated in the course of the centuries, or Tacitus had lied when he described

them as men of ferocious habits. They were oppressed by their princes and their rural nobility, dulled by too much reading of the Bible; they were stodgy formalists and microphiles; they divided their time between the singing of canticles and the consumption of black bread, beer and coffee. What they needed, said Beyle, was wine, glorious wine to set their dull heads to effervescing. Better to be rogues, scoundrels or criminals than to sink into the morass of inertia. Dullness was the only word to describe their temperament; they were incredibly, profoundly dull. And the girls, pink and plump and charmingly healthy, were as dull and wooden as the men.

Henri never saw—he never even suspected—the secret, passionate side of Germany: the Germany already lighting the fire of biblical vengeance at every home altar; the Germany arming secretly and in silence. He went his carefree, critical way: talked too much, observed too little, boasted freely of his adventurous past, rejoiced to feel his timidity vanish—at least when he was away from Pierre Daru—and smiled to hear the money chinking in his pockets. He began to pay his debts like any bourgeois, enjoyed the best of

health, and was not unconscious of his little glory. M. the Adjutant Beyle reigned under his superiors and over prostrate Germany with just a little smugness, and thus two happy years went by.

* * *

The Emperor of Austria declared war on Napoleon. "European liberty has taken refuge beneath your banners," said Archduke Charles, to his soldiers. "Your victory will set men free: your German brothers, still in the ranks of the enemy await your sword to cut their bonds." And Napoleon answered: "I come as swift as lightning."

Orders of March 28, 1809: Twenty-eight commissaries, including Henri Beyle, will report immediately in Strasbourg and place themselves at the disposition of the Intendant General Pierre Daru.

Henri set forth with a band of rude comrades who regarded literature and ideology as so much tripe. They assured him that they lived on the best possible terms with each other and believed in liberty for all: but their interpretation of that theory was unusual, said Henri bitterly, for they felt themselves to have the right to interrupt a comrade when he was reading, writing or dream-

ing, with their scurrilous remarks: and they had the most inconveniently sharp eyes when a comrade tried to walk out on them and get on with the long journey a little faster. Beyle was in a state of petulant irritation at the end of two days, especially with a certain Fromentin, who had a mottled face and a savage sly expression tempting a blow.

They followed the army as it advanced across Austria and Pierre Daru proved himself a more exigent and crotchety master than ever. 'Nitwit!' his accusing eye seemed to say, every time it fell on young Beyle. 'Never will be anything but a nitwit. Why should I be burdened with a nitwit like you?' He always managed to save the most exacting jobs and the most blistering criticisms for his young cousin: and Henri bore the brunt whenever the army up in front sent back complaints, or important couriers disappeared, or convois went astray or orders, as frequently happened, were executed backward. What a life! Pierre Daru moved through the countryside like a thundercloud, while baggage trains got entangled with cannon, new detachments going up to the front mixed themselves up thoroughly with

wounded coming back, and the noise and confusion were incredible. They crossed battlefields where the corpses yet lay unburied, and hurried through abandoned camps and the smoking ruins of villages. There were continuous rumors of danger from enemy bands let loose in the countryside, and the men slept fully dressed, their hands on their muskets. One night a nasal voice near Henri's bivouac begged for water all night long: it was a wounded officer, a bullet between his shoulders, who died at dawn.

They stopped long enough to catch their breath in Vienna, where the women were beautiful and the music excellent. Mme. Pierre Daru rejoined her husband at that point, and Henri discovered that she was not averse to a little light flirtation. Unfortunately, time was short and he never felt an experience to be worth while unless he had time to analyze and ponder it, and decide that it really was a pleasure.

And so the months went on, and Henri Beyle grew older, molding his character, partly consciously, partly unconsciously, on forthright, rugged lines, until the time came when he sloughed off the concealing mold and stood revealed as the

finished statue. He was a man at last. His will was strong, and his mind cultivated enough to be a pleasure to himself and a useful tool for his tastes and ambitions. His eyes, which had seen many dreadful scenes, soldiers burned to death on the roadside, horses dead on their feet and still running, were level and piercing; and his expression, from having read so many things in the faces of men, was worldly and skeptical. His voice had achieved a compromise between his former variation from a bass and tenor squeak and settled to the tones of one used to command, and his gestures were now sure and vigorous, while his shoulders were squared and muscular to meet the day's burden that one day would bend them. His whole being was more worn but stronger. His springtime days were over.

* * *

Henri might easily have said:

"Justice has at last crowned my worthy efforts, and I can put a star beside two of the happiest days in my life: August 1, 1810, when I became Auditor to the Council of State, and August 10 when I was made Inspector to the Furnishings and Buildings of the Crown. Two sinecures are

twice as good as one, especially when both are well paid. I am a rich man, as you may have guessed from the majestic gold chain across my waistcoat, and I lunch at the Café de Foy and dine only at the Frères Provençaux. Strangers and provincials, observing the lordly manner in which I call for my coddled egg, ask the waiter 'who that distinguished man is?' 'Why, that is M. de Beyle,' says the waiter: 'He is a famous dandy.'

"Women, once objects of fear and trembling to me, are now at my feet; and though I have never been quite a favorite with Pierre Daru, the Emperor's protégé, I am a great favorite with his wife, who is far from cold to me. I also have a mistress, Angelina Bereyter, who is a charming person. She is a singer—singers are a step above actresses, however talented—and she has no rival in Italian songs. I find there is a peculiar pleasure in hearing Paisiello's songs from such beloved lips. Evenings she makes her appearances, I frequent the Odéon or the Opéra Bouffe: but other evenings I am still faithful to the Comédie Française. With music and the theatre united to charm me, my days pass very pleasantly, and I have besides my horses, and a tilbury which comes for

me after the play to take me back to my cold partridge and champagne at home.

"Once there, my eyes wander from Corregio's *Leda* hanging on the wall, to Angelina, less lovely but more living. The gods are good and just, and they have lavished their favors on me."

But to whisper such things, even, would have been to tempt their anger and resentment.

* * *

A courier was going to rejoin the Grand Army in Russia. He hurried from ministry to ministry, collecting heavy sealed envelopes and official papers. His friends besieged him to take a letter to a general or a package of medicine to the chief surgeon; and on his last day, he betook himself, magnificent in dress uniform and gold lace, to Saint Cloud where he paid his respects to the Empress, and bent over the King of Rome, just awake and smiling in his cradle, so that he might carry first hand news of him to his father.

Beyle left Saint Cloud in haste to get on with his journey. He traveled swiftly till there were no more roads or guideposts, and from Königsberg on he made his way through an unrecognizable countryside completely devastated by the

army. From Kovno on there was nothing but desert. He finally abandoned his calèche and continued his journey on horseback: time pressed, and he was once more in the army.

When he reached Moscow, it was in flames. A drunken cannoneer near him hit the officer of the guard with the flat of his sword; and a few yards farther on another soldier, equally drunk, reeled directly into a burning street and perished before his eyes in the flames. In one lane a platoon was pillaging a house; in the next, a detachment was sacking a flour store. Convoys blocked the streets. None of the officers had any control over what was happening: if one section of the city was completely destroyed, they moved into another. The Grand Army had seen too many fires to be disturbed by them, as long as there was a chateau or palace left in which to billet the troops. Confusion ran riot in the unhappy city; columns of troops and supply trains crept through the smoke, were forced back by the fire, and beat around for a way to get through, amidst riots, oaths and finally bedlam in which one officer lost his carriage and another his command.

They came out at last, out of a city transformed into a pyramid of flame and smoke under the moon. Beyle brought back to camp the one thing he had pillaged: a volume of Voltaire bound in red morocco, which he felt a little ashamed of, for now the set, should it survive the desolation, would be left incomplete. He kept it beside him, nevertheless, while he dined on raw fish and figs and lay down in his calèche to sleep. He was just a little drunk on the cheap white wine his men had stolen for him.

And so Beyle made the retreat from Moscow, following the débris of a shattered army through frozen roads and icy fields, and showing such initiative, coolness and presence of mind that even Pierre Daru realized at last that his little cousin was not just an erratic commissary, but a man with something strange and proud about him that called for admiration.

One incident near Beresina finally won Daru's heart completely. The soldiers of the Grand Army by that time were little better than a mob, filthy, unkempt, haggard, unshaven. Daru looked at them one morning in sickness of heart, and turned to

find Beyle beside him, his face clean and shining, and his chin fresh shaved. "Why, you have washed and shaved!" cried Daru. "You are a gentleman."

It was a time to know how to command, not how to obey. Beyle had to find bread for his troops for fifty days on the road from Moscow to Vilna. Toward the end, feeling at the end of his strength, he hurried on ahead of the rest of the army, and reached the settlement in time to get fresh post horses, and finished his journey in safety.

To Pauline
Vilna, December 7, 1812

I am in the best of health, my dear, and thought of you often on the long road from Moscow here—a road fifty days long. Everything I ever possessed is gone, and I have only the suit on my back. A more agreeable feature of the affair is that I have also lost, together with my other belongings, a great deal of unnecessary weight.

To Felix Faure in Grenoble.

I am writing to you at last, my dear cousin. Try to imagine us, my brothers in arms and I, in the most horrible state, disgustingly dirty, and eating on our knees from a pan of potatoes.

And, finally,

To Pauline
Königsberg, December 28, 1812

I saved myself this time by summoning up all my will power, for time and time again I saw human strength fail completely around me, and men go down to death.

* * *

War came again in the spring of 1813: every spring in those times had its quota of war with the ensuing thousand of deaths. In 1813 the scene happened to be laid in Saxony. It left Beyle unenthusiastic. He began to think that all this campaigning was too much of a good thing; it was no longer romantic. It was just a nuisance. Fighting was no event after you had seen enough of it; the retreat from Moscow was amply sufficient for anybody and it was high time, said Beyle, that the governments of Europe let their people alone. Anyone who has drunk too much sweet punch never wants to look at punch again, and army life has much the same effect. Beyle had finished his scientific study of the genus fire eater and never wanted to see another one.

And yet he had to go with them, grumbling and observing; and incidentally observing one

thing that he had never observed before, a battle. He came to several conclusions about it. In the first place it was nothing at all like the neat museum pictures in which geometrically lined soldiers run at a brisk trot toward other geometrically lined soldiers while a general waves a shining sword from a convenient hillock and the wounded and dead lie picturesquely around, as nicely costumed as in an opera. A battle in reality consisted of a large amount of cannonading—if cannons whistled instead of thundered, think how unromantic everything would be—and a large, completely empty landscape, pieces of which suddenly moved about in a disconcerting way. A hedge would turn into a troop of infantry and then fade again into a hedge. At intervals a squad of cavalrymen would charge madly across the scene, but no one ever knew where they came from or where they were going: and if the Generals knew what was happening they had the advantage over any of their men. By evening Henri had seen all there was to be seen at the engagement of Bautzen, had advanced under fire from twelve to three, and learned all there is to be known about battles, 'which is to say, nothing.'

The campaign was over at last and the student of men, shrewdly realizing that 'in two years the honor of having taken part in the Moscow campaign will be a very doubtful one,' profited by the armistice to put in a hasty application for a quiet post in Florence or Rome. His application had the usual official reaction and he was ordered to report immediately to Sagan, Silesia.

The cemetery at Sagan very nearly had the honor of sheltering him permanently, for a pernicious fever was ravaging the countryside, and had carried off four hundred people in a few months, which was no trifling achievement in those days. The fever lost no time in falling upon His Honor the Intendant, the lord high ruler of Sagan, and His Honor went methodically through all stages of the disease from raving delirium to quiet inanity in which he counted the flowers on the wallpaper and shuddered at a monstrous combat between two flies on the window sill.

When he was better he fled to Dresden and beguiled his convalescence between picture galleries and concert halls, delighted to be rid of the hordes of people who weighed on his shoulders

in Sagan—only to come down with the fever again, and this time, nearly die.

"What a year this has been!" he wrote, when he was better. "It needed only an intendancy and an illness to make it quite complete."

And then France was invaded by the Allies. Prussians, Austrians, Russians and English swarmed in and pursued the vanquished Emperor to the very gates of Paris, and the French defense had to be organized quickly and through great difficulties. The country was exhausted, the fortified towns without cannon, the younger soldiers unorganized, and the taxes unpaid. Bourbon royalists incited the provinces to resist the Emperor, and the Emperor for his part had not made plans for anything but victory. His followers had nothing but their persons to offer. Each Senator was sent on special mission into a different district, and Senator Saint Vallier went to Grenoble with Beyle as his assistant.

Beyle was at first plunged into gloom at being snatched away in the middle of his pleasant convalescence, but his mood changed when he discovered that M. de Saint Vallier, Senator though he was, was an agreeable man who had no passionate

desire to be an executive. The situation appealed to Beyle, and he needed no encouragement. It took him only a moment to shake off his languor and call up his usual decisiveness and intelligence. He was in practical command of the Grenoble section, saw to and foresaw everything, reprovisioned, conscripted, made political decisions and even directed the movement of the troops. He had a typically French taste for doing things on the grand scale and performing miracles with a turn of the hand. Grenoble was soon running smoothly with Beyle as its acting head, while M. de Saint Vallier looked comfortably on, to the mutual satisfaction of both.

But Beyle liked games when they were very new, and his zeal never survived too much routine work. After the novelty of being an organizer on a big scale had worn off he began to find unsuspected flaws in his position; and from a few they increased to hundreds. They had sent him to Grenoble and Cularo when they had an entire Empire to choose from; and here in Grenoble all the idiots in town made fun of the 'de' in his name and said they knew Henri, Cherubin's boy, but they couldn't imagine who this M. de Beyle

was, and wrote sarcastic comments on the notices he posted around town. There was nobody in the town to talk to, or exchange ideas with; not only the people but the very stones breathed boredom. All his former friends and associates were salting away titles, decorations and pensions while he worked his fingers to the bone in the obscurity of a subordinate position. The government had no right to refuse him a prefecture after his distinguished service.

M. de Saint Vallier, who had never encountered a man with such a plethora of complaints, finally gave Henri permission to go to Paris and unburden his soul to the Ministry. And so he left Grenoble, took to the high road again, and reached his destination just in time to see the taking of Pantin and Montmartre by the Allies, and their final triumphal entry into Paris.

CHAPTER VII

Italiam, Italiam . . .

As the tides of war swept him from Brunswick to Moscow, and from Moscow back to Sagan, a desire took form in Henri's heart. A ghost of a desire at first, but growing steadily stronger until it emerged into the clear regions of his consciousness and took on the shape of an irresistible urge to action. Italy, the country he had once deserted with relief, became the object of an acute homesickness that was finally an obsession.

It all began with faint recollections, fleet and incoherent. Pale ghosts walked through his memory; intentions materialized and then evaporated; pictures surged up, intermingled and effaced themselves. Then came thoughts that touched more closely, and faint emotions. Mme. Marini swayed gracefully before his eyes and vanished. A mist hung heavy on the Tuileries, and transported him in a moment to the mists of Lombardy. A taste or a smell evoked forgotten scenes. A

light rain in the spring took him back to Italy and all the 'divine tenderness' he had known there. Writing to Pauline one evening, tired and alone, his thoughts escaped from Paris and a project was built upon a recollection: "Remember, Pauline, when we are old, if the gods have allotted us a little fortune, we will find a palace in Italy and go there every year to spend the two months just before the summer time."

Such fleeting thoughts were the smallest part of his inner life during the years following his return to France in 1802. Compared to the mass of projects he had to deal with, or even to the ones his thoughts most liked to dwell upon, they were trivial bits of driftwood afloat on the tides of his consciousness. But little by little, as he went through campaigns and office work and grew to hate the noisy life in the north, they grew stronger and more frequent.

The stolid Germans seemed ten times as stolid every time he remembered the sprightly Milanese or the lovely Romans. The pictures in his room in Brunswick symbolized the difference. Three pictures hung on one side: a Raphael portrait whose expression seemed to change with every

hour of the day; a Da Vinci *Cena,* all grace and sorrow; and a luminous Claude Lorraine. On the other side were two more paintings: an erect, military portrait of Frederick II, and a picture of the midnight sun as it seems at Tornea. Raphael, da Vinci and Lorraine symbolized the Midi; Frederick II and the pale light of Tornea, the Prussian dictator and the Lapland landscape, were the North. Both admirable, certainly: but which was the happier?

If it is ever possible to set a date in such matters, it must have been about 1807 that his feeling finally crystallized. His hungry soul now fed on everything he could find about Italy. He read *Corinne* and the *History of the Italian Republics in the Middle Ages.* He rode through Austrian landscapes or Hungarian landscapes, and saw in them the Alps, the Apennines and the soft Lombard plain. His longing threw a golden veil about the past, and all the distance seemed illumined: chagrin forgotten, illness nonexistent. He no longer spoke of those first two years in Italy as years of tears and melancholy: they were now enchanted and divine. Happiness, which had eluded him in peace and war, in France or Ger-

many, in Grenoble or Paris, surely lay beyond the Alps. Come what would, he had to return to Milan. Angelina Bereyter and the tilbury had no more charms for him; champagne and partridge tempted him not at all. He tried to get the ministry to send him to catalogue the Vatican, or accompany the pictures the Emperor had seized in Rome: and when that failed, he brooded over the problem alone.

Time began to hang heavy on his hands, and he amused himself by reading an incredible number of Voyages in Italy, and by investing in some handsome paper, octavo size, edged with a red border, across the top of which he wrote in English:

"A tour through some parts of Italy."

Finally he could stand it no longer, and without waiting for an official excuse, the Auditor to the Council of State and Inspector to the Furnishings and Buildings of the Crown asked for and received a vacation and started south.

Four months leave, three thousand francs in his pocket, and a chance to find his long lost liberty. Life seemed too perfect to be true.

Sunday, September 8, 1811.

"All yesterday evening and all today were full of overpowering sensations for me. I have frequently been at the point of tears from emotion. Shall I confess what touched me the most of all in Milan?—if I do you will realize that this page is intended for my eyes only. It was a certain odor of manure peculiar to its streets. That, more than anything else, helped me to realize that I was really here again. . . ."

He had arrived about five o'clock: customs and finding his lodgings took him about an hour: dinner another hour; and a hasty walk in the Corso di Porta Orientale a few minutes. Then he went to the Scala, and was so overcome with emotion that he burst into tears. It was only the next day that he recovered his self-possession and began to look about him.

He had come back after ten long years of absence. He had come back for many reasons: because he longed to see Italy, and Milan and the Scala; and because he missed the adolescent youth who had wept because his heart was empty; and because of a third reason, so unreasonable that

he only half admitted it to himself: a dear, imperious, bizarre desire. He had never yet attained the happiness he sought in love: and the women he had adored had always disappointed him. There was only one he had ever known who still remained an ideal: the one he had worshipped in silence on his first trip to Italy; the apparition whom his dreams had crowned with superhuman beauty—Angela Pietragrua. His heart would never be at rest until he saw her again, and his life would never be illumined by hope until he followed his adventure to the end and found his love and happiness once more.

He went without hesitating further in search of Angela. Her father, honest Borrone, kept a shop and was therefore easy to find. He gave Beyle Angela's address, and Beyle ran to it.

He stood before her in tortures of embarrassment. What could he say? 'It is I: Henri Beyle. Joinville's friend. Don't you remember?'

She didn't remember. At least she barely remembered. Who was this ghost from the past? She was surprised, and bewildered: but she did not repulse him. She even smiled, a little vaguely: *'Ma che cosa mi dice! Pare impossibile!'*

And finally she was as amiable as ever, and might even let herself be loved. Yes, said Beyle to himself, she might easily let herself be loved. He fell immediately into the blackest despair. "Timidity was born within me, and black melancholy filled my soul." He saw himself with sardonic disdain: saw himself buy a cane to keep from holding his hands behind his back *'à la papa,'* and saw himself 'learn to whirl his cane in a dozen ways to prove that he was a sophisticate and a great lady's man.' He saw himself fall into moods of bitterness in which 'he would have delighted to tear at bleeding flesh like a lion.' He laughed at himself, and hated himself, and winced to see himself a helpless slave.

Goddess Angela did her small best to encourage the timid mortal, but all in vain.

"The most exasperating thing about my discomfort," wrote Beyle in his diary one evening, "is that I know as surely as that I am sitting here that I have but to possess myself of Madame P. She looked long and meaningly at me at the theater, and never loses an opportunity to show me little attentions. Only this evening, as I lightly squeezed her hand while taking a snuff-box from

her, she sought and soon found an opportunity to squeeze mine in the most marked manner."

Angela had been surprised at first by Beyle's arrival. She was not exactly inexperienced, but it was the first time even in her life that she had had a man disappear into the distance for ten years and then reappear with declarations of having loved her all along. When she had a chance to think it over, she remembered the Chinaman: but she remembered him as an amusing, carefree young person and not at all as a disdained lover. It was all very confusing, but she consoled herself with the reflection that a good many novels seemed to have just such things in them, even lovers with a cheerful demeanor when their lady love disdained them. And then she began to be intrigued herself. Beyle's pretentions to elegance, his handsome clothes, his wit and his irony, first surprised and then attracted her. His sighs, tears, melancholy, anger and rage were sure signs of a man who loved deeply. Angela began to see no reason why she should let him suffer. Why so much formality? These Frenchmen! She wept to encourage him, and called to him through her

tears. It was usually an effective method, but in this case it was all in vain. Next she said:

"Go! Go! I beseech you to go, for my own peace of mind. Tomorrow I may not have the strength to send you."

Beyle had read enough classic tragedy to know very well what such an avowal implied, but he pretended not to understand and for tuppence he would have taken her at her word and gone. Finally Angela's kindliness knew no bounds, and since he had not the courage to steal kisses for himself, she began to bestow them. It was thus he triumphed, and commemorated his victory with an inscription on his suspenders.

And it was only then that he remembered the *vetturino* he had hired for his voyages and which still awaited him, and left to explore Italy with great speed and efficiency: Bologna, Florence, Rome, Naples, and Ancona, all in a month: like the time-table in a guide book.

* * *

It would take an old-fashioned burlesque epic to describe his adventures after he got back to Milan again, breathless with haste and emotion.

Such an epic would describe the manner in

which this heroic lover, hearing that Angela was summering at the Madonna del Monte, made the ascent to that rocky village and came near fainting on first beholding the object of his affections. It would tell next how he arranged a rendezvous for midnight, and how he was put off for no known reason, and how he beguiled the evening with his companion *Ossian*. It would then recount the manner of his ingenuity in throwing husband and faithful servant off the trail, by coming incognito to the village, and describe how, his ingenuity somehow being insufficient to the needs of the case, he made his entrance in an open carriage preceded by three torchbearers, while the entire population of the village stood in their doorways and wondered audibly why such a noble stranger had deigned to visit them, in an open carriage, in such a rainstorm. Next the epic would recount the manner in which the entire cast of the drama went back again to Milan: Angela, Angela's son, the faithful servant, the unsuspicious husband, and Henri Beyle: and deal with the way in which Henri disported himself, with machiavellian subtlety, amongst so many sensitive temperaments; and lastly would make mention of the manner in

which he came to suspect not Angela, naturally, but her associates, of being not completely disinterested in pecuniary matters, and appreciative of silver from whatever source.

And yet Henri knew happy moments. There was the day when he learned his leave had been extended for a month and that he could accordingly spend some time longer in Milan—which was a more convenient city for rendezvous than a summer resort on a cliff. And there was the day when they sat on two benches in Signor Borrone's shop and talked in innuendo because of the clerks; and Henri was so witty and charming that Angela was enchanted, and he saw 'in her eyes, and in the blush that mantled her soft cheek, the sure effect of one great heart upon another.'

Happy moments? He knew only happy moments. He was happy all the time, in spite of fears, disappointments, proved trickery, missed rendezvous, last minute notes bewailing her husband's suspicions, and appeals not to pursue her if he valued his safety. He was happy all the time because he was in love, and in love with the most beautiful woman in the world, so beautiful that she was terrifying, so unearthly and lovely that

she was almost awe-inspiring. For Angela, to Beyle, was head and shoulders above all the rest of womankind, living or dead, from the first day he saw her.

He was accordingly, deeply depressed when he had to return to Paris, November 27, 1811.

"Picture a man at the most delightful party," he wrote Pauline, "amidst a throng of exquisitely gowned women, glowing with pleasure as they smiled upon their lovers. Picture a perfect setting, full of luxury and grandeur, swimming in celestial light from a thousand candles and beguiled by a thousand subtle perfumes. Then picture this enraptured, sensitive soul obliged to leave the ball and go out into the outer air, where all is thick mist and a muddy, rainy night: so that he stumbles three or four times and then falls into the mud and filth. And there you have a complete picture of my return from Italy. . . ."

The Saxon campaign gave him even more reason to regret his beloved land, and his attack of fever in Sagan had the one good result of securing him a sick leave, which he saluted with joy, and lost no time in using for a hurried trip through Paris and down to Milan.

September 7, 1813, he saw his beloved city again, and saw it with such a surge of emotion that he dropped a whole cup of café au lait on his new gray cashmere trousers. He was still weak and ill, but his very languor gave Milan an added charm. He saw it this time just long enough to want to see it longer.

Again he lived and breathed for his Countess Simonetta, as he called his temperamental mistress; and again she did not live and breathe entirely for him. She stayed in Monza most of the time, and the center of his universe had to shift a little, to his disgust for he hated change and complication. Sometimes she left him to himself or bade him return to Milan and he could not help wondering what she did on those days when she was invisible and he beguiled his hours in art museums, evolving a theory of art, and writing a little. Evenings she was absent he wandered to the theatre and saw Vigano's ballets, and the Monbelli sisters, the Twin Glories of the Stage. The Austrians invaded Isonzo, blockaded Venice, and menaced Lombardy; the battle of Leipzig had been fought. The war might have engulfed Milan

and found him sitting pleasantly in his stall at the Scala.

Napoleon finally fell, and with him fell all hope of being a prefect. Back in France, Beyle pondered the question and did not long hesitate: he went quietly and quickly over to the august house of the Bourbons, and formally requested a place. But the august house of the Bourbons apparently were quite unconscious of the existence of their humble and most obedient servant, H. Beyle.

And so he shook the dust of France from his feet and set out to live where all his preferences called him. He bade farewell to Paris and farewell to all the past: he wanted never to think of them again. He went out to build his life beneath a brighter sky, lit with the sun of happiness. He went to settle in Italy, in Milan. *Incipit vita nova.*

Part II

STENDHAL, THE EGOTIST

CHAPTER VIII

The Great Attempt: 1814-1821

IDLERS in Milan, stop, look at the Frenchman strolling up and down in front of the Duomo. His passport says he is stocky, with a big nose, low forehead and oval face. There is nothing remarkable in his appearance save for the piercing quality of his rather small eyes. He wears a cravat wound three times round his throat, a moiré waistcoat and skin-tight trousers; and he whirls his cane with slightly conscious grace. Observe him carefully, whether you like or dislike him. No one in the world more knowingly and unhesitatingly intends to make the art of egoism the supreme end of his life.

Recipe for Enjoying Perfect Liberty

Beyle had thirsted after this world's happiness, and so without a moment of repining, he had thrown off all constraint and fled incontinently toward what he believed to be the living waters

of liberty. Liberty was his aim and his ambition: pure liberty, liberty unsullied by any sediment of duty. He stood in horror of any obligation: direction, teaching, promises or time-tables. A ghost of a bond with any human being weighed on his spirit. He escaped them all.

Picture Beyle in Milan. He left his room when he felt like leaving his room. He wandered around the Corso as long as he wanted to. He visited the Brera when the fancy struck him. He dropped in at parties or not as he pleased.

Only one universal yoke still rested on him: the lack of money, and he had to draw up a budget. A budget was a constraint, but one he had got used to. He had less than no desire to be rich, but he had forebodings of being forced into a position in which he might have to earn his daily bread by the sweat of his brow. And so——

"BUDGET," began Beyle.

> "*Debts* ..... 37,000 francs, total.
> (Creditors raising the very devil. Can dig up a few thousand francs to throw to them by selling Paris furniture and cabriolet but not enough to make an impression on total.)

"*Assets:*

Veterans pension ..... 900 per year
Annuity from mother's dowry ..... 1800 per year
Allowance from father .. ?
(Hard to estimate. Old man gets meaner the older he gets.)

"Can't hope to live in France on that. I'd be laughed out of town.

"But French money is worth more in Italy. The lira is at 76 centimes, and cost of living is less here.

"Take Venice, for example.

"Furnished rooms	600
Gondola	720
Theatre, 3 times per week	600
Food & coffee, 120 a month	1440
Total	3360 francs per year.

"And Milan is even less expensive, especially if you don't keep a carriage. An excellent dinner for two at the royal restaurant comes to about six lire. A seat at the Scala is six.

"Taking it by and large, and leaving out the debts which will have to wait, I ought to be able to live perfectly comfortably and freely here."

Io sono di Cosmopoli. . . .

He found the phrase in an opera somewhere, and took it for his motto. "As for me, I am a citizen of Cosmopolis. . . ."

He had always detested his family and he came to have the same feeling about his country. The very thought of it depressed him and he cultivated forgetfulness.

France, according to Beyle, was a trivial, pallid country, a country without virility, a country of eunuchs. Trifles and vanities from all over the world came to find their mart in France. Frenchmen had no spontaneity, and a vile taste in art and music. How could such anemic people understand Michelangelo? Fussy, conventional pictures pleased their eye, and banal, sugary music their ear.

Everything in Italy was done on a grand scale, and everything in France on a petty. "Why, it has been raining torrents here in Milan for three days, without interruption. It would have taken at least two months for that much rain to fall in Paris."

The French did not even know how to love, and

worse still they did not know how to hate. They seldom went in for a rousing revenge or a good old fashioned stabbing.

Napoleon left Elba and came back to France, and France fought her last bitter battle against a united Europe. Beyle stayed quietly in Italy. He was enjoying an ice in St. Mark's square in Venice the day the fighting came to a climax at Waterloo, and any emotion he felt at the Emperor's fall was one of faint disdain. The last virtue France possessed—a certain dash, a certain flair for glory—had vanished into air. Her shield thenceforth should bear a candle snuffer.

Recipe for Living Intensely

A really well-cultivated ego is a sensitive plant and has to be nourished in a sympathetic environment. Most people would not have selected Milan for the purpose. Few strangers went there for pleasure. It was too commercial and too overgrown a city, they said. Too much rice and corn and too few orange trees.

But Henri Beyle loved Milan. He loved it because he loved it, which is a good enough reason for anyone. He loved it because most people hated

it. He loved it because it was a mighty, proud city, and because it hated and loved magnificently, and because of its plays, its coffee with cream, its women, its pavements and its smells. And he loved it especially because he could live there in any way or manner that he liked.

A great singer who happened to be also a beautiful woman, Elena Vigano, was at home every evening after the theatre. Henri could go to her house in day clothes and boots, stretch himself out boots and all on the sofa in her living room, and leave again without attracting any attention. That was Milan. Or he might play billiards with a friend, feel in a vile humor and play two, four or eight games without saying a word: and the friend would never hound him with impertinencies about his lack of spirits. That was Lombardy. It was the one place in the world where a good specimen of temperamental, capricious ego was respected.

But this particular ego was not content to dwell on an isolated happy island in a troubled sea. It liked to withdraw into itself, but it also liked to expand at will. And so it annexed unto itself a whole country.

It constructed a sort of Italy de luxe after its own fancy. It built it of some characteristics profoundly true and penetrating, and of others materialized out of thin air. It was a strange country, that Italy as Beyle imagined it.

You met only nobility there: princes, dukes, marquises—and mere counts. Bankers occasionally crossed the scene, but only if they were very rich. As for business men, bourgeois and farmers, they were simply non-existent. There were no stores in the cities, and still less were there tenements. The streets were built with theatres, museums, picture galleries, studios, cafés, and salons. Especially salons. Salons where lovely women fluttered like butterflies and men of the world conversed endlessly and prince cardinals passed, resplendent in their purple.

Love was the one great national occupation. Life consisted of loving, suffering and loving again, and men stopped you on the street and draw you into a convenient doorway to sob out the story of their shattered lives. The mornings were non-existent, the afternoons spent in contemplation of masterpieces in the museum, awe-struck contemplation mixed with tears, the eve-

nings sacred to the theatre and to conversation stilled only when the loveliest arias were sung. And the nights were exquisite. Not only because of the clear blue moonlight and the crystal stars, but because it was at night that witty men and fascinating women, at the Princess's or at the Ambassador's, matched wits with each other or lapsed into tender reveries.

And Italy was above all not the languorous land beloved of northern convalescents. Italy was supremely the land of intense living. Italians had no fear of being themselves, and lived exempt from ridicule. They loved disordered passions and splendid crimes. The underlying worth of life, energy and vitality, the capacity for gusto in everything, was the mainspring of Italy. Most energetic people in France were to be found in a distinctive uniform at work on a rock pile. In Italy they thronged the streets in perfect liberty, and even the women had the most admirable ferocity on occasion.

The human plant was withering fast in France. It preserved its primitive sap and vigor in Italy. It was the one refuge for an egoist wishing to live intensely.

Recipe for Enjoying Life

Beyle had made his preparations and set the stage. It remained only to choose among life's delights.

One delight never betrayed or evaded him. It was impossible to the herd, (that alone would have endeared it to Beyle,) and it was a perfect cure for ennui, that bane of men.

That delight was in observing men, studying their characters, dissecting their souls, classifying their ways and habits. A wonderful game, a cross between a kaleidoscope and a magic lantern. And Milan was a wonderful place to play it.

For the Milanese were endlessly amusing. Vivacious. Natural. Carried away by every passing emotion.

If they played a card game they were almost hysterical with excitement from the beginning. They came to blows over a doubtful play, they cursed each other, they cried *"Cojone!"* and smote the table. Wonderful. It was hard to realize that they were among the calmest of Italians, and that Neapolitans might be ten times as emotional.

Tourists came through Milan and Beyle

watched them by way of variety. Madame de Staël stopped by on her way from Coppet to Pisa, where she intended to try the effect of the pure Tuscan air on her ailing young husband, and threw Milan into an uproar. Byron dropped in occasionally to the loge where Abbé Brema kept open house, not unconscious of the fascinated attention surrounding him, and delicately disdainful. He noticed Beyle, and the two egoists surveyed each other with a certain fraternal understanding.

So much for the great game of observation: but there was another pleasure almost as dear to Beyle, and that was the enjoyment of beauty.

Beyle had developed a whole technic for the enjoyment of beauty. He made as many preparations to listen to music as an opium smoker to enter the realms of illusion. He freed his mind of all cares and came to the theatre relaxed. He dined neither too little nor too much. He picked his seat carefully, and as far from his acquaintances as possible lest some crude soul disturb him with conversation or jiggle against his chair.

For what is music? (Said Beyle.) A mathematical formula for the harmony of the spheres?

A high, difficult science? Not at all. A perfectly physical pleasure, a voluptuous sensation, a stimulus to mind and heart and an invocation to love. Listening to music, the Ego is wafted high above vulgar reality, smiles at the future and weeps over the past.

And similarly, what is art? (Continued Beyle.) Is it the knowledge of epochs and schools and lives of painters? Is it a dissertation on the theory of line and color? Is it higher criticism of design and perspective? It is not. When you look at the noble figures in Corregio's *Virgin* or da Vinci's *Cena,* you think first of beauty, then of earthly beauties dear to you, and then of yourself. Your sensations are profound and inexplicable: they come from the depths of your being. They would lose their charm if they were analyzed. Painting, like music, is nothing but a divine extension of the Ego.

And yet . . . Henri's ego, delving into such subtle and esoteric pleasures, was not yet completely satisfied. It lacked the final stimulus to awaken it to a more keen sense of itself. It lacked love.

Only when he loved could his thoughts and feel-

ings be at their most intense. Only when he loved could he be transported into a higher world, so full of glorious torment and delight that he could look down from the heights and pity all the pallid creatures who dragged out their days close to the earth—and did not love.

Egotism

Egoist is not quite the word for Henri's twist of personality. Egotist comes closer to it.

The Egoist is the ruffian who breaks into other peoples' lives and tramples on them: the Egotist constructs his own life, lovingly. The Egoist is the glutton eating his food with noise and gusto: the Egotist wants only choicest delicacies, daintily served on crystal and fine linen. The one goes through life with sublime unconsciousness, bound and impeded by convention and cheating on it every time he can: the other lives his life according to a conscious plan, believes in nothing beyond life itself and wants his money's worth in everything. The Egoist is a lout, the Egotist a virtuoso. One is a bass drum, the other a violin. One hides himself, the other parades his selfishness. The Egoist thinks himself alone in the world. The

Egotist knows that here and there, in Paris, London or Berlin, there are people who enjoy life even as he does, sophisticated souls bound to him in subtle ties to resist the vulgarity of ordinary men, sophisticated souls whom Stendahl called the 'happy few.'

The Egoist is usually gorgeously happy. But I suspect there may be something a little pathetic about the Egotist, ever trying to trap the ocean in the meshes of his net.

The Egotist

And so Beyle, the Egotist, took up his life in Italy, and spent his days alternately idling and puttering, the laziest and busiest of men. Milan saw his sideburns—grown long in the Italian style—at every new opera, amusing comedy or witty gathering. Milan heard him dwell and dissertate on his two favorite themes, the general loathsomeness of France, the general worthiness of Italy. Milan heard him praise his twin ideals, energy and passion. And Milan saw that Beyle, who fled a bore as he would the pestilence, never tired of dwelling on his pet theories any more than he

tired of that one long beloved phrase from the *Matrimonio Segreto.*

He lived entirely in his mind and spirit. His earthly lodgings mattered not at all to him, and he was equally happy in a hotel like the Albergo del Pozzo or the Albergo Bella Venezia, and in a small furnished room in a dank, vermin-infested street like the Via San Pietro all'Orto. All he asked of his surroundings was room enough for bed, books, clothes and papers.

He was on the other hand extremely critical of cafés and restaurants, in which he spent much of his time. And it was in cafés and restaurants that he very often gratified his itch to write. It was an intermittent itch but violent when it seized upon him, and when it came, usually unexpectedly, he could not wait to go home to his nice apple green notebooks, but scribbled madly on the first thing come to hand. He jotted notes on scraps of paper, playing cards or book margins. He wrote lines and thoughts on cuffs, waistcoat, watch glass and heaven knows where else. And then as suddenly as it had come the itch departed and he went his idling way.

He was, like most bohemians, extremely criti-

cal of other peoples' inconsistencies and very lenient with his own. And no one in the world had more inconsistencies than he, for his temperament was so complexly organized that he was constantly hurled from one extreme of feeling to another.

He was vulgar and cynical—and the most delicate of lovers. He was a liberal, hated aristocracy, admired Napoleon in exile—and was more aristocratic than any red-heeled noble or Faubourg dowager. He liked army words and army manners—and was full of provincial hesitancies and timidities, relics of his childhood in Grenoble. He was skeptical and credulous, blasé and enthusiastic, sincere and hypocritical, hysterical and lazy, obstinate and changeable, vain, proud and modest.

In love he combined an impulse toward abject surrender with a powerful contradictory impulse toward conquest. He came, bound deceptively as a captive, to command like an emperor. He came a supplicant bearing offerings which he secretly designed as gages of victory. He was as naïve as an adolescent lover and he was always completely conscious of the part he played.

For Beyle was a case of dual personality. One

half of him was forever acting, while the other half watched with critical amusement. He could not resist strutting through his little Vanity Fair, and he could not help watching himself do it. He was ever a sincere and anxious actor.

And from the very intricacy of his temperament sprang its richness of interest. Any day or any hour in his life gave birth to a phantasmagoria of pictures, emotions and impressions. He loved life, and art, and material things, and even his interest in Ideology was but an extension of his love for life, an attempt to savor in other people some secret sap of vitality, some flowering of the eternal tree.

His friends in France, even those who had once dedicated their lives to poetry, placidly married, saved money and became heads of departments in the government, bank directors and iron manufacturers. His friends in the army, once dashing warriors in search of adventure, drank their demitasses, told long anecdotes of their campaigns and toasted the next coming of the Emperor.

But Beyle the fugitive seeker after happiness in Milan continued to live for the triumph of the individual.

Said Beyle:

"I am not of those who see a storm come down upon a summer day, and cry out at the ravaged crops and homeless peasants. I am of those who think: 'So much the better. The air will be clear and sweet to breathe, and air is delicious new washed by rain.' I am of those who think of nothing but their own pleasure. I cling to my being. I am the Egoist. I am myself."

CHAPTER IX

Battle and Defeat

Money

Lots of poor people have wanted to live without working, but very few have done it.

Beyle got along nicely for a few months by the simple expedient of refusing to think of money. Money he considered a vile preoccupation and beneath an Ideologist. He ignored it.

And then, bit by bit, a faint uneasiness seemed to hang in the air about him. "Money pains are never mortal," said Beyle, and shrugged it off. But the uneasiness came again, a few weeks later, and this time settled on him. He found himself counting, stinting, fearing. The skies darkened.

And then a blow fell. The Intendant at Grenoble refused to forward him his pension. Said the official notice: "The beneficiary being notoriously absent from the city, his pension will be paid to him at such time as he shall himself request it at the cashier's window."

"To the devil," cried Beyle, "with Intendants and all their works! I wasn't absent during my twelve campaigns."

Four lire a day dropped out of the budget and left disaster, sheer disaster. A friendly dinner of four was a financial crisis. A new pair of trousers was a calamity. Henri began to cast a longing eye at Grenoble, and even to consider spending a few dreary months there with a view to recapitalizing his pursuit of happiness. A sacrifice, of course, but worth it.

"Oh money!" cried Beyle. "Money which I have always despised and never could respect, you force me to admit your merits. You are the well-spring of liberty. You make easy a thousand things in life, and life itself is difficult without you. You can buy anything in the world, excepting only glory. Those possessed of you are handsome, young, beloved. . . . Without you they are helpless and at the mercy of mankind. . . . There is no chance for flight without money, no chance for a new life in a newer clime. Without money, however proud your soul, you wear your chains. . . ."

It was the only subject on which Henri Beyle ever agreed with Chateaubriand.

Henri watched Grenoble with the expression of a hungry dog. Slavery or liberty depended on the state of things in Grenoble. Nice old grandpapa Gagnon was dead, and his house not yet sold. Cherubin had the rights to it, and Cherubin had other possessions, fields, meadows and farms. But Cherubin would never relax his crooked fingers till he was dead.

Would he never die? He seemed determined to spite his son by living. Henri's fancy sketched a pleasant day-dream of life after Cherubin's death. Trips to England, at 40,000 francs. Trips to Greece at 40,000 francs. And a lordly life in Milan when he got through, mixed with extravagant intervals in Paris.

On June 20, 1819, Cherubin Beyle died.

How much? Henri wrote eagerly to the lawyer.

Affairs in confusion, answered the attorney. The deceased had an unfortunate taste for buying properties, and was much entangled in mortgages. He had also attempted to raise merino sheep with disastrous results. His private income was from an annuity, and his debts would just about cover the residue of the estate. . . .

Henri made a rapid transition from hope to

despair. He went over his budget and saw not a ray of hope. Only the rich can watch life go by from the sidelines; the poor must work. It is only fair.

After seven years of struggle, he faced reality and made his plans to leave Italy. Hunger brought the bear down from the tree.

The World at Large

Henri held to the very practical idea that a passenger on a comfortable vessel should not criticize the captain's opinions.

Milan was again under Austrian domination, aristocratic domination and domination loathsome to a liberal like Beyle. And not only that, but M. Metternich had a curious lack of humor when it came to criticisms of the Holy Alliance or His Imperial Majesty, the Emperor.

But what of it? Count Saurau, who governed Milan, was easy-going. All he asked of the Milanese was that they should amuse themselves, grow rich and leave him alone: a very good bargain. Silk was selling well, the Milanese earned and spent freely and it was a gala time for theaters and balls. Milan was to all intents and purposes 'a

rich republic, with a taste for art and pleasure.' 'The Austrian government is so just, fair and considerate in Milan and Venice that everything is really above criticism.' *Chi si contenta, gode.* Why should Beyle enjoy the evenings at the Scala less because a squad of Austrians guarded the Governor's palace? Why should the music under the chestnut trees in the public parks be any less pleasant because it was Hungarian?

'Italians,' said Beyle with a shrug, 'would have to have their charter of freedom sooner or later: but politics are the death of art.' For the moment it was pleasant to live peacefully under the paternal hand of M. Metternich.

So far so good. But with his typical inconsistency, Beyle followed up this concession to good sense by compromising himself as thoroughly as he possibly could. He was heard to remark openly and frequently that Kings and Emperors were all charlatans, and priests all hypocrites. He was known to spend his days with liberals under surveillance by the police. His friends were all suspects. The Abbé of Brema, 'a tall young man, all in black, haggard but distinguished looking,' was a patriot. Vismara was a patriot. Confalo-

nieri, Silvio Pellico, and all the other Milanese who created Italian romanticism in letters and Italian political freedom, at the same time, all were patriots.

Beyle let Austria alone and did his best to offend her.

Like all illogical positions, it ended by catching him in a trap, a trap with two jaws.

One danger sprang from a trait in Beyle which he would have gladly foregone, and that was his inescapable Frenchness. Struggle as he might, he was still the essence of everything French. His clarity was French, his offhand manner with serious things, his peremptory ways, his paradoxes and his irony. He was as French as the Voltaire whose bust Grandfather Gagnon kept on his mantelpiece; as French as his friend Paul Louis Courier. He was French in all his mannerisms, even his mannerisms of criticizing France: French to the fingertips.

And his Italian friends, observing this Frenchness of him, were perturbed. Why, said they, does this Frenchman seek to become one of us? Where does he get his funds? Why has he settled in Milan? Why does he sleep while honest men work,

and wander half the night while they are sleeping? Why does he lend an ear to every conversation? There is, said the Milanese, something decidedly wrong somewhere.

They drew off and grew chilly. They crossed the street when they saw him coming down the Corso, and pretended not to see him if he passed. When the melancholy hours fell, and he dropped into someone's house for conversation, all conversation stopped immediately.

Beyle was horrified and bewildered by the change in his beloved Milanese. He blamed every cause but the right one and tortured himself with surmises. He was the only person in town who did not suspect the real reason, and a friend at last tactfully enlightened him. It was a delicate subject to broach, said the friend, but some of the comrades feared that his loyalty was not above question, and as long as anyone felt that way. . . . Very well, said Henri, thank you for telling me.

He was chilled and saddened and drew still farther into himself.

The other danger was less bitter to his pride but much more serious to his person.

The Austrian police had begun to suspect a

certain Henri Beyle, a seemingly inoffensive man, of being in reality a dog of a liberal and a highly dangerous writer, author of various works tending to discredit the crown and the altar, and the man behind various pseudonyms. They had begun to suspect especially that he was none other than a certain Stendhal, who had written a scandalous book and should be summarily punished.

And the Austrian police were right. Henri had already begun to publish books behind the mask of an assortment of noms de plume, and at first more or less by accident.

It all began when he was waiting one day for Pietragrua, who had given him an assignation and was as usual late in appearing. He was tired of listening for footsteps and starting at the sound of a creak in the stairway or the slam of a distant door, and he took up a book to amuse himself by reading. The book happened to be Lanzi's *History of Painting,* in six volumes: and before he had read more than a dozen pages, he realized that it could beguile endless hours for him, and devoured it voraciously. As he finished it a mad idea seized him, and almost as if compelled by an outside force, he grasped his pen, took a sheet of

paper, and wrote the following letter to the Paris newspapers:

Boulogne,
October 25, 1811

Gentlemen:

I have just finished a *History of Italian Painting* in two volumes, covering the field from the birth of modern painting toward the end of the 12th century down to contemporary times. This work is the result of three years of travel and research combined with prolonged study. M. Lanzi's celebrated work has also been very helpful to me. I am sending my book to Paris to be published, and I have been urged to beg of you to announce its coming to the public. Both volumes will appear in 8° toward the end of 1811. . . .

And with that coach to ride in, he set out upon the road to Olympus. The road had seemed impossible to scale when it led over the arid wastes of blank sheets of paper: it led pleasantly upward over the foundation work of another man's writings. Beyle actually enjoyed compiling, arranging and seasoning insipid pages. Thanks to Lanzi, as well as to a hundred others, he wrote his first book with facility and pleasure, and eventually produced and published a work entitled: *"A His-*

tory of Italian Painting, by M.B.A.A." It was no jejune work. According to its slightly cynical author, it had 'a hundred and fifty years in its belly.'

One vista opened into a second, and even before he completed the book on painting, he forestalled himself and published another, "*The Lives of Haydn, Mozart and Metastasio,*" by Louis Alexandre César Bombet, in which he used much the same technique of appropriation and worked in the same lordly and luxurious way. Barrety supplied him with most of the life of Metastasio; Winckler contributed the material for Mozart; and Carpani generously handed over the Haydn.

Not with deliberate generosity, however, and in fact with resentment. Carpani turned out to be the fly in the ointment. Carpani was still, most inconveniently, alive, and Carpani bought the new life of Haydn with natural curiosity to compare it with his own. With horror and incredulity he discovered that the new life of Haydn was to all intents and purposes his own. Bombet said: I was present during Haydn's last illness . . . and it was Carpani who had been present during Haydn's last illness. Bombet remarked that he

was suffering from a fever . . . and it was Carpani who had suffered from the fever. His horror turning to rage, Carpani cried thief in all the newspapers.

But the rapacious Bombet was not easily upset. He showed as much ingenuity in his defense as in his offense, and with consummate coolness accused Carpani of having stolen from him, which reduced Carpani almost to a point of hysteria. And then Bombet invented another Bombet, a Bombet junior, who came to his elder's rescue and swore to his honesty and veracity.

The papers finally tired of the quarrel and left Bombet to his triumph and Carpani to his helpless rage.

Whereupon a third author appeared in the world, full-fledged like Minerva, and this third author was a M. de Stendhal, one time cavalry officer, who was some day to be the most famous of the lot. M. de Stendhal produced a work on *Rome, Naples and Florence.*

The books on musicians and Italian paintings had been full of fine, original writing in spite of their foundation work of plagiarism, but Beyle had gradually realized that stealing from others

was on the whole more trouble than it was worth, especially as you never could be sure when an author would turn out to be alive. The new *alter ego* of M. Beyle, M. de Stendhal, wrote from his own head and heart, and wrote the freshest, most vigorous book he had yet produced. His inhibited craving to write had been released, and blank pages were an invitation to him.

And he thoroughly enjoyed himself, and enjoyed the joke he was playing on the world. It was great fun to live peacefully behind the veil of various pseudonyms and watch their progress through the world. It was even more fun to write everything he thought under the very nose of the most suspicious reactionary government in the world. Who would ever guess that the mysterious M.B.A.A. meant M. Beyle, Aforetimes Auditor? That Louis Alexandre César Bombet was the same M. Beyle? That M. de Stendhal, one time cavalry officer, was even more the same Beyle?

The answer to all those questions, however, was: the Austrian police. No writer, however full of pseudonyms, could treat the Austrian Emperor and M. Metternich with so much insolent condescension and slip by unnoticed. The secret ser-

vice set to work to root out the man behind the veils. They were persevering rather than clever, but they persevered to good purpose.

Times had changed in Milan. Austria no longer concealed the iron hand in a velvet glove, and the government was now avowedly one of force and terror. And Italy had changed in her turn to meet the new situation. The time had come for the supreme struggle. Italians had no dearer dream than that of shaking off foreign domination and rising united from the Austrian ruin. The country seethed with plots, revolts and repressions. Few people were innocent, and no one was safe.

A gradual realization of this state of things dawned on Henri, and he shivered as he felt the veils growing thin. He did not know that the police had done him the honor of reading all his correspondence en route since February of 1820, but he did suspect that mustachioed men followed him with apparent carelessness in the street, looking in shop windows as he did, and waiting patiently outside when he entered a house. Before very long the name of Stendhal, a man supremely worthy to be hanged, had reached the ears of Metternich and H.M. the Emperor.

Finally, in 1821, the Piedmontese and the Neapolitans openly revolted, and the Milanese authorities, fearing the infection might spread, redoubled their precautions. The city was honeycombed with spies and police, and Henri Beyle, alias M.B.A.A., alias Bombet, alias Stendhal, was routed out of Italy not only by poverty but by fear for his life.

The incident had a sequel. Confaloneri was arrested soon after Beyle's departure, and when he was judged and condemned at Speilberg gave the Austrian authorities the names of some of his associates: in other words, of those of his associates whom he knew to be out of reach of danger. Among them he mentioned a Frenchman named de Bell, who was, said Confaloneri, an *uomo sommamente pericoloso.*

But by that time the 'extremely dangerous man' had put the Alps safely between himself and his pursuers. Had he not done so, he would have been awakened some morning by a police sergeant and some Croatian privates, taken to Santa Margarita, and thence in a closed carriage to Speilberg. And for ten or fifteen years after that he could

never have told anyone whether he was innocent or guilty.

Love

There remained love, always the most important element in Henri's life.

Angela Pietragrua was one of those women who think men ask only to be hoodwinked. And when she had a lover who had come all the way from France just to be near her, she felt more than ever that she had no need to be careful with him.

"I am going to run up to Padua," she would say, "and you can wander on over to Venice till I send word to you to come and join me."

He would go to Venice and then to Padua, only to find she was on her way back to Milan.

"My husband's jealousy is aroused," she would say. "You'd better be sensible and go back to Grenoble for a while. What if it is the middle of winter? Weren't you in the Moscow campaign? You shouldn't be afraid of a little cold."

He would go back to Grenoble—or at least as far as Turin—till her husband's jealousy was allayed.

And then his meek obedience began to get on Angela's nerves and she teased him to amuse herself.

Henri saw through her vagaries quite well; yet even in his deepest fits of depression he could not break with her. He had found a new name for himself by this time—Dominique. Henri Beyle now had three names for himself—Beyle the man, Stendhal the egotist and Dominique the friend. It was Dominique who was wounded by Angela's dishonesty and by her businesslike requests for her two hundred francs a month. And it was Dominique who continued to close his eyes to even less pardonable traits in Angela—until one of her servants, in a fit of pique with her mistress, brought him obvious and undeniable proof of her infidelities. It was only then, so much did Dominique prefer even a pretended love to none at all, that he could give her up. Never again, he swore it solemnly, would he take the part of a lover in an old-fashioned farce.

And he was quite right, for the tragedy was about to begin.

There was a woman in Milan like a da Vinci portrait; a woman with a pure oval face, a chiseled

mouth, brown eyes, and a pale brow beneath her headdress. Even her friends said she was strange; we can imagine what her enemies said of her. It was rumored in Milan that she had loved Ugo Foscolo, the wild red-headed poet who had gone into voluntary exile to escape the Austrian domination. Perhaps she had, for her eyes were melancholy, and Foscolo was a man to break the heart of any woman who loved him. It was sad, too, that because of her harrowing experience she lived in terror of love and loving. Her name was Mathilda Visconti, and she had married, and had to desert, a Polish officer in the French army—Jan Dembrowski.

Stendhal fell in love with proud, shy Mathilda. He loved her poignancy, and the way she closed her lovely eyes and opened them again, and the way she seemed like an orange tree that feared to blossom. All his coarseness and cynicism melted away in her presence. He learned to adore instead of command, and sacrificed even his well pampered ego.

But Mathilda never understood him. He was not handsome and he was certainly far from graceful. He was even a little ridiculous with his

attempts at elegance and his slightly rotund figure. She saw him enter her house with foreboding and suffered all the time he sat in her living room, devouring her with his eyes and glaring at any man who dared to speak to her. And she waited with weary distaste for the inevitable letter that followed his departure, a letter in which he always begged forgiveness for his conduct, heaped reproaches on himself, and burst into impassioned protestations that he could never be himself in her presence, but that if she could bear with him she would discover that he had, beneath his deceptive appearance, a pure and devoted soul she could not help but love in return. Poor Beyle! What a nuisance this Frenchman is, thought Mathilda. Just when people were beginning to tire of the old gossip about me, he's going to set them to talking again.

The one-sided affair dragged on, a dreary tragedy rising to climaxes of despair. One such came to Beyle the 20th of September, 1818, soon after he fell in love with Mathilda. What happened on that date, no one but the two concerned ever knew; but he commemorated not only the day but even the hour and minute in his diary.

And we know all the details of his disastrous trip to Volterra. Mathilda's two sons were at school there, and she left Milan one day in May, 1819, to go and see them, forbidding Beyle to follow her; and Beyle, of course, followed immediately.

Volterra in 1819 was a very ancient city, built on the top of a Tuscan hill in the midst of a rolling landscape dappled yellow with crumpled rock among the silvery green of the olive trees. It had outlived its day, and brooded in solitary grandeur over the far off Etruscan civilization whose guardian it was. The slightest living thing caused a sensation there, and such events as a woman visiting the school, or a stranger lurking in the streets, set all the old women in every doorstep to mumbling and gossiping.

Into such a setting came Dominique, cleverly disguised (so he thought) in a pair of green glasses, and wandered hungrily around the school, fearing to enter and unable to keep away. The temptation to see her once was too much for him, and he drew too close to her. She recognized him and went white with fury. Audacity! Indelicacy!

The world would think he was her lover . . . Presumptuous fool!

He fled back to Florence and then to Bologna, exiled from Milan, driven out of his earthly paradise by an incensed angel. When he came back finally he was forbidden to write to Mathilda, forbidden to mention love to her, and forbidden to come to her house oftener than twice a month.

For a time he trembled on the brink of madness. He felt like one of those tragic Shakespearean heroes who live only for their grief and proclaim their sorrow to the reticent hills. A white satin hat in the distance made him faint and short of breath: an old architect whom he had once seen at Mathilda's was a demigod. The name of her house on another's lips set his hands to shaking. Each fortnight in his life was determined by the reception she gave him on his semi-monthly visits. If she received him with her usual quiet dignity, the next two weeks were roseate. If she frowned or turned away, he spent fourteen days of melancholy.

For days before he went to call on her, he planned scintillating conversations and appealing looks: but as is the way with fore-planned con-

versations and looks, they quite deserted him the instant he entered her drawing room, and he stood stricken speechless and scarlet before her. No wonder Mathilda found him stupid and depressing.

He watched before her windows night after night. He had no vestige of hope that anything might happen. Her light would be put out, and he knew it would not appear again, and yet he would go on watching. The last passers-by would turn into their doorways and the streets would be empty and echoing. Two in the morning. Three in the morning. He would make up his mind to go, start bravely off, take the first turning, walk quietly around the block, and come back again. The curtain might move a little, a face lean out to breathe the sweet night air . . . Four o'clock, and nothing to notice but a stray cat in the distance. And then rain might begin to fall, pleasantly, on hot forehead and he would set off again, pacing the streets with long strides till dawn came and his servant saw him enter and throw himself face down on his untouched bed.

Beyle cursed the unjust gods who let him suffer. Mathilda might have realized that he was the only one in all Milan who loved her as she wished

to be loved. Instead she took him for a careless seducer of women. She should have seen his soul leap to meet her own behind his eyes. *Et sui eum non receperunt.*

Mathilda begged whatever gods there might be to discourage Beyle. Nothing she could think of had the slightest effect on him. He swallowed her rebuffs, anger and indifference with equal eagerness and came back for more. She was weary to death of him.

"When you said to me with such evident frankness," wrote Beyle in his diary, " 'Ah! midnight at last!' I ought to have realized once more how relieved you always are to be rid of my importunities. I ought to have sworn upon my honor never to trouble you again. But I have no courage when I am near you . . ."

She had no warm feeling, not even that of pity, for him: while he cherished his very sufferings since they came through her. "If some superhuman power had said to me: 'Break the glass on your watch and Mathilda will be just what she was three years ago—a casual acquaintance,' I honestly believe that I would never at any moment have had the will to break it."

"Good women!" he cried. "Good women are as mischief-making as the bad."

And yet it wasn't Mathilda's fault that all this had happened. It couldn't be Mathilda's fault. The idea was blasphemy. It was the fault of her education, her religion and her false modesty. It was the fault of her wicked cousin, the Traversi woman, who slandered him. He could have revenged himself on Traversi for he knew a certain story . . . But to wound Traversi would have been to wound Mathilda.

He finally found a way out of a situation which was rapidly leading him to the door of the insane asylum. He decided to stake his all on one last throw of the dice, doubles or quits. He went to see Mathilda and announced that he was leaving Milan forever. If she uttered a word, or made a gesture to bid him stay, he would stay. If not, he was through forever.

" 'I have come to say good-bye to you,' I said.

" 'When are you coming back?' said Mathilda.

" 'Never, I hope.' "

She did not tremble. Her expression did not change. She felt neither joy nor chagrin at his

going. The very beggar on the corner meant more to her than he did.

When you want to commit suicide, you do not sigh nor look tragically around you as they do in novels written by ignorant novelists who know nothing about it. You feel, instead, a profound inertia, and speak sweetly to death, as to your only friend, begging him to deliver you from an intolerable burden. And then you write your epitaph, perhaps like this one:

ENRICO BEYLE
MILANESE
VISSE, SCRISSE, AMÒ,
QUEST' ANIMA
ADORAVA
CIMAROSA, MOZART E SHAKESPEARE
MORÌ DI ANNI . . .
IL . . . , 18 . . .

and ask to have it chiseled on a block of marble the shape of a playing card. You brood over the different ways of saying good-bye to the earth. You draw elaborate pistols in the margins of your manuscripts. Some fine morning . . .

And yet . . . Why act like a department store

clerk who has been reading too much Werther? Why take a chance on missing your aim, and going through a humiliating recovery in a hospital amid the jeers of your friends? Why wander through life with a humiliating scar? . . .

Henri no longer felt like committing suicide, and those were the best excuses he could think of for not doing it. A little feeble, but they sufficed for Henri. He had always one passion even stronger than despair, and that was the passion for watching himself live.

And so Henri-Dominique accepted defeat and life, abandoned Milan and foreswore his dream of happiness. It cost him many a qualm, and some months of hesitation. It was not easy to leave the Scala, Italian music and the place where Mathilda lived. It was hard to drink the *distacco amaro.* He did not leave in the spring, he did not leave in June. He finally left in August, when the implacable sun drove all Milan to lake and mountain.

* * *

"I left at last in a state which you can well imagine. I went first to Como, believing, fearing that I might retrace my steps at any moment.

"I left a city where I could not have stayed

longer and remained alive. I left a city which it tore my soul to desert. I left my life behind me—what was life worth without her? I died a thousand deaths at every step I took away from her. 'I breathed in sighs.' (Shelley.)

"I tried to lull my anguish by talking of ordinary things with postilions, and found myself solemnly discussing the price of wine and wondering whether the sou would go up or down. And thus I went through Airolo, Bellinzona and Lugano. The very sound of those names makes me tremble even today, on June 20, 1832.

" . . . I decided to cross St. Gotthard on horseback, rather hoping that a bad fall would shake me up and give me forgetfulness: old cavalry officer that I am, and in spite of a lifetime spent falling off one horse after another, I still have a horror of slipping on loose stones and being caught underneath my mount.

"All went excitingly enough until my courier stopped me, and informed me that though he cared less than nothing whether I lived or died, he had his professional reputation to consider and would have had a hard time getting anyone to cross the pass with him in the future if it became known

that one of his protegés had been allowed to slip over a precipice.

"At that I slowed down a little, though the courier's complaints continued all the way to Altdorf. And at Altdorf, my whole mood changed for the ridiculous reason that I saw there a very bad statue of Wilhelm Tell in a little stone skirt.

"There, I said to myself: you see what the loveliest things can become seen through the eyes of unworthy men. Such was Mathilda, surrounded by her false friends in the salon of la Traversi.

"Sweet melancholy succeeded to despair, and I asked to see the chapel. The next morning, I went on to Paris in the bad company of a squad of Swiss officers who were going to Paris to become part of the guard of Louis XVIII."

CHAPTER X

"Beyle Is a Strange Animal. The Gods Made Him So."

CALAIS, and travelers, newly arrived from Paris and going on the next morning to Dover, dining at a table d'hôte. An English freight captain, a swarthy, stocky man. A very blond Englishman named Edward Edwards. A chubby faced Frenchman who drank and talked continuously.

The Frenchman said something foolish.

"It's a lie," said the English captain succinctly.

"Perhaps you're right," said the Frenchman agreeably. "Let's turn in." Beer never did agree with him.

They went on together the next morning, and when they reached London, Edwards drew the Frenchman aside.

"Monsieur Beyle," he said, "I have enjoyed your company very much, but one thing about you rather surprised me, and that was the way you tolerated the remarks of my fellow-countryman

the Captain. He gave you the lie direct. Perhaps we English are a little touchy about these things, but in your place . . ."

"We French are equally sensitive," said Beyle, "and I am quite ready to give the Captain the lesson he deserves. Where is he now?"

"That sort of person is usually found in an alehouse somewhere near the Tower," said the Englishman. "We can go look through them if you like."

But the captain proved elusive and Edwards fell into bad humor.

"He never would have got off so easily if I had been in your place," said Edwards. "I'm half inclined to take the matter into my own hands and settle it."

"Parbleu," said Beyle, "I'd rather keep it in mine, if you don't mind. Do you think I'm afraid of the man?"

"I didn't say that, sir."

"And pray what did you say, monsieur?"

Fortunately for the captain, he was never found, and after a prolonged search and more dissension, the Englishman and Frenchman parted, with perfect good humor, and Edwards

went about his business, whatever it was, while Beyle continued his inspection of England.

He was content at first merely to be in London, for France and the French had irritated him terribly on his return to Paris. They were vain and thoughtless, and their plays as stupid as themselves. He could barely restrain himself from crying 'Fools! Fools!' at them in the Comédie, and at the Opera his facial contortions when they sang French music were such that people turned to look at him. He finally fled.

He chose London for his refuge partly because they didn't speak French there, a distinct advantage, and partly because no old friends would rush up to him in the street and ask why he had stayed so long in Milan and why he had come back at all, and incidentally because he could see Shakespeare played there in all its original strength and beauty. Othello and King Lear are good companions for a heart-broken lover.

He found interesting things about London immediately. The dining room in the Tavistock Hotel, for instance, where there was a side of beef weighing forty kilos, and a knife the size of a sword to carve it with. And the great national

habit of tea drinking: Beyle, thank you, kept to his native wine. And the inexhaustible strangeness of the city, the pale, gloomy light, and the silent crowd in those interminable streets, hurrying to their work with never a needless word or a gesture. It was a strange combination of enormous factory and idyllic corner, London. It had fascinating little streets full of little brick houses with little gardens, the size of a pocket handkerchief, and bearing three sentimental rose bushes. It was worlds away from Paris, farther away than Vienna or Berlin.

He went to hear Kean, the great actor, and discovered to his astonishment that in London you had to engage in a fist fight at the door of the theatre and force your way in: but that once you had won a place in the parterre the very people whose eyes you had blacked came in and sat down beside you, with friendly smiles and no hard feelings whatever. Kean was a magnificent interpreter of Shakespeare, and all the more appealing because off stage he was a barroom hero and vulgarian instead of an affected fop: but his technique surprised Beyle.

"These English," he wrote, "full of inhibitions

as they are, use entirely different gestures from ours to express the same emotions."

One evening, Stendhal and his friend Barot went to see some girls whose address someone had given them. They lived on Westminster Road, in rather a doubtful neighborhood, and Stendhal and Barot went armed with horse pistols and daggers. To their astonishment they found instead of a nest of adventurers and adventuresses, three poor young things, timid and gentle, in a house like a doll's house, with paper-thin partitions and funny, old-fashioned furniture,—tiny furniture, doll's furniture. They curtsied politely and brought tea, and then insisted on showing off their garden by candle-light. It was as minute as the house, but boasted all necessary household utensils—a beer machine and a bluing vat.

The next morning the Frenchmen ordered in cold meats and fruit in a regal way. And the next evening they took the girls' breath away by appearing with champagne—"real champagne," said the girls. Corks flew, and the girls smiled their naïve smiles, and were happy.

Stendhal would have taken his English girl back to Paris for tuppence. She assured him that

she would eat nothing but apples, and would cost so little, so very little . . .

* * *

Stendhal was back in Paris, without the English girl. He was engaged in doing nothing whatever and pretending to be very busy. It is easy to pretend to be busy if you make a habit of doing the same things at the same hour every day. Stendhal's days were nothing if not repetitive.

He got up at ten and walked over to the Café de Rouen, where his friend Mareste and his cousin Colomb met him. As soon as they sat down, M. Pique the proprietor produced a cup of coffee and two brioches for each—not one brioche or three brioches, but two.

Shortly afterwards, Mareste would rise to go to the Passport Bureau in the Police Department, where he worked: and Stendhal would accompany him, every day the same way, past the Tuileries and up the quais. They had long, profound conversations en route, conversations in which Mareste pronounced such dicta as "Bad taste is the father of all crime" while Stendhal listened to him in awe and admiration. They shook hands always at the door of the Department, and Mareste

went in to his work, while Stendhal strolled off to spend the bad hours, the hours when he was alone.

Not that he didn't have plenty to do. He could wander under the trees in the Tuileries, look at the stamps in the shop windows, read the newspapers at Galignani, stop in at the Louvre with the free ticket Mareste got for him, or stay at home and read Shakespeare.

And from dinner time on, the rest of the day was easy. They dined at a table d'hôte at the Hotel de Bruxelles, Rue de Richelieu. It was a page out of Balzac. Most of the habitués, said Stendhal, were a cross between adventurers and second-rate conspirators. They came in with a rush, grabbed their napkins and flung open their newspapers. There was Mareste, first and foremost: "Little, hunched, stocky, and too avaricious to dress as well as he could afford to," making fun of any genuine emotion or sentiment, caustic and bitter like the Piedmontese he was. There was Barot, the Lunéville banker, happily engaged in rounding out a snug little fortune, handsome, good humored and normal enough. There was Poitevin, a 'half pay officer who had received his

decoration on the battlefield of Waterloo: absolutely destitute of wit or imagination, but with an inimitable manner, and the lover of so many women that he had no need to exaggerate the number.' There was Colomb, the faithful cousin, the clerk in the Revenue office. And there were a dozen others.

Mareste was Henri's favorite for a long time and their mornings and evenings were spent together at first in perfect harmony. But Mareste fell from grace. His mother was on the point of giving her fortune to the Church, and Mareste promptly married to avert such a calamity. He had always been avaricious but he was now a positive miser. One day he insulted Henri beyond forgiveness:

"It is easy to see," he said, "that you speak from the point of view of a man who possesses nothing."

Henri took the heroic resolution of changing cafés, and deserted M. Pique and his brioches. He went over to the Café Lemblin, a few steps nearer the Palais Royal, but miles away in spirit. Mareste accepted the challenge and remained

faithful to the Café de Rouen. Their great friendship was over.

Friendship had failed him, but Beyle had other consolations. The Comédie and the Odéon, of course, were poor substitutes for the Scala, and the very thought of a comparison woke his suffering anew. But after the play was over, he had a refuge for melancholia. He fled to see la Pasta.

La Pasta was the reigning toast of the town. Dilettantes unharnessed the horses from her carriage and drew her home in triumph. And once home she would entertain her court like any queen, still glowing as Rosina or tender as Doña Anna. The chorus of her intimates came with her, singing her praises in diapason, and exclaiming in harmony that her work had been magnificent, splendid, splendissime; that no singer in the world had ever or could ever equal la Pasta. And then la Pasta would call for the card tables and they would all set to work to play *'pharaon.'*

That was the best moment in the day for Stendhal. La Pasta was automatically fond of any Frenchman who knew and loved Italian music, and her husband, in spite of a conviction that Stendhal was bizarre, tolerated him. As for la

Pasta's mother la Rachele, she adored him and would beg him to come in early before the singer returned from the Opera. Stendhal always listened sympathetically while she described the *risotto* she had made that day or the *minestrone* she would make the next. The French, said Rachele, had never heard of minestrone and cooked rice into a sort of glue. Milan was after all the only place for risotto. Stendhal loved her Milanese accent.

The play at *pharaon* always went on long after midnight and the porter in the Hotel de Bruxelles finally grew tired of getting up at three in the morning to let Stendhal in. So Stendhal moved over to the Hotel des Lillois where la Pasta lived, and had only to walk up a flight of steps to reach his home.

* * *

The Stendhal legend was created in those years, and it was the Stendhal of the Paris salon who stamped himself so indelibly on the public mind that even now his true image grows blurred and confused behind it. He lives on through the decades perpetually forty and perpetually cynical.

The truth back of all his famous insolence, was

that he had a horror lest anyone learn of his Milan defeat. To hide it more completely, he adopted an attitude of offensive superiority toward all mankind. He wanted neither pity nor curiosity, and dreaded being either teased or sympathized with. He wanted only to hide his exaltation and his sorrow deep within him, and build a wall before it of irony and malice. No one would dare force his confidence if he always attacked and wounded: if he was always Stendhal the scoffer no one would dare suspect his secret weakness.

The more notorious he became in Paris, the better pleased he was. If he met the devout Mme. de Mareste at Madame d'Argout's he launched into an anecdote about the Archbishop of Paris till Mme. de Mareste besought her cousin to stop him. If he saw Madame Gay, the mother of the lovely and much beloved Delphine at Baron Gerard's he let fly a ribald phrase and saw her turn and crimson, while he laughed at her. Hostesses feared his tongue and the ensuing scandal. Baronne Gerard never forgot the night she imprudently asked him for an amusing story, and he obliged her with one—which would have made a truck driver retire in confusion.

He went every Sunday to the salon of M. Destutt de Tracy, the venerable master of Ideology. He was an elegant little old man, his eyes shaded with a green vizier, forever standing on one foot like a heron in front of his fireplace. All officialdom met at his house, all the one time emigrés nobles, now functionaries of S.M. the King of France.

"M. Beyle," said M. de Tracy incautiously, "what do you think of our emigrés?"

"If I were in power," said Beyle instantly, "I would lock them all up in some of the departments near the Pyrenees, and I would surround those departments with an army or two, encamped in the fields at least six months out of the year. And any emigré who tried to put a foot outside those departments would be efficiently shot."

Sweet Madame Ancelot, the Muse of the French Academy hesitated to invite him and he teased her into it.

"I know perfectly well why you won't ask me in to your Tuesdays," he said mockingly. "Your house is always full of Academicians and you don't dare ask me with them."

"Not at all, M. Beyle," said Mme. Ancelot po-

litely. "I would be most delighted to have you with us next Tuesday."

Tuesday evening as the first guests were assembling, the butler announced M. César Bombet, and Madame Ancelot, to her horror, saw Beyle enter and plunge immediately into vivacious speech:

"Madame, I am too early. I am always too early. I am a very busy man, you see, a ve-ry bu-sy man. I am always up by five in the morning, to make the round of the army barracks and see that my goods arrive in proper condition, for as you know, I am the army contractor for stockings and cotton nightcaps. Of course you all know my cotton nightcaps. I venture to say they are the best in the trade. Cotton nightcaps are my field, and I can hold up my hand and swear that since earliest childhood I have given my life to them. I would not be anything else for anything in the world. People talk about their artists and their tuppeny writers and their little books and pictures! Bah! I go on keeping a whole army, a whole army mind you, in socks and caps. I keep an entire army from catching cold with my special knit, extra fine, four-ply, long strand cotton night-

caps, which cannot be equaled here or elsewhere. Madame, I——"

Madame d'Ancelot was divided between indignation and hysterical laughter, and her guests between politeness and distress. Beyle was in the seventh heaven at the success of his joke.

His passion in life was to upset established ideas and attack dogmatic phrases and affectations. A man next to him once praised the grandeur of the Napoleonic campaigns and heroism in general. Beyle interrupted immediately.

"Heroism?" said Beyle with a laugh. "I can tell you about heroism. I have seen a whole French brigade turn tail and run when it was surprised by five Cossacks, the gilt-hatted generals leaping ahead like rabbits, and I following them as fast as I could, one boot on and one off. Only one old grenadier offered any resistance that day. They tried to give him a cross afterwards and he hid from them and then swore he had had nothing to do with the affair.—He thought his general wanted to shoot him. There's glory for you."

Another man spoke of famous military sayings. "Lies!" said Beyle.

"I can give you an example of famous mili-

tary sayings," he said. "The third day out on the Moscow retreat, I found myself separated, with fifteen hundred men, from the rest of the army. An entire Russian division was known to be between us and the rest. Night came down and found us in that predicament, and we spent the hours of darkness in groans and lamentations. The men were at the point of panic when some valiant spirits roused themselves and made us a speech, an eloquent, military speech which went something as follows: 'You lousy ——— ——— ———, you'll roast in hell tomorrow if you don't grab your ——— guns and get after these ——— Russians.'

"The valiant soldiers were inspired by such noble words and in the morning we marched courageously toward the Russians, guiding ourselves by the light of their bivouac fires. It was a daring thing for us to do, and we were not a little pleased with ourselves. We were still more pleased when we found exactly one mangy dog in the Russian camp. The entire division had left in the middle of the night . . ."

He told Royalists that Louis XVIII looked like a fattened steer; poets, that poetry is a refuge for

sloppy thinking; manufacturers that they should stick to their calico and not try to meddle with governing; French women that they were affected; French men that they were dull. To those who remonstrated with him, he made a mock reverence, smiled ironically, and said: "Sorry! I'm the rat and you're the cat. Better save your breath."

And the whole world said with him:

"He's an original devil. The gods must have made him so."

CHAPTER XI

Paris

An unforeseen thing happened to Dominique in the next few years. After hating and attacking all things French, after pricking French illusions one by one like a boy picking off clay pigeons in a shooting gallery, after mocking and scoffing at all Parisians, Dominique fell in love with Paris.

Perhaps his hatred of it first lightened when he found something there that he had sought for years in vain—a really romantic mistress. He had always claimed that only Italian women were capable of fire and passion, and it rather surprised him to find them for the first time in a French woman.

Her name was Menta and she was no ordinary conquest. Her father was a high dignitary in the Empire and her husband a French peer.

She fell madly in love with Henri, and Henri was both surprised and pleased, for it was an unaccustomed experience. And having fallen in love

with him, she treated him to all the emotional gamut of an eighteenth century novel. With a subtle mind she combined a temperament as tumultuous as the ocean, and he never knew whether to expect tenderness or abuse from her. She was an abject slave on Tuesdays and a frigid goddess on Wednesdays. She implored him to come, and then refused him the door. She invited him to her country place, and then hid him in a cellar and took his food down to him by way of a rope ladder. After demanding romance for years, Beyle was handed it in lavish helpings—in fact in almost too lavish helpings. His life needed no editing to become a novel.

For instance:

Henri Beyle to Menta

> Never be uneasy because of me. I love you devotedly. My love surpasses any you have seen or read of. To set your heart at rest, I would have it resemble the tenderest feeling in all the wide world. . . .

Menta to Henri Beyle

> Your love is the greatest unhappiness that can befall any woman. If she is gay, you destroy her gayety. If she is healthy, you destroy her health. The more she loves you,

> the more barbarous you are. . . . It is true tragedy to set one's heart on an unworthy object. I envy those who hate the men who are unkind to them. . . .

And so on, and so on, for two long years, from 1824 to 1826—till Menta tired of amorous whist and stopped the game.

Stopped it while Henri still loved her, and to his great pain. But she had at least taught him that all French women were not dolls and that emotional tempests were possible in Paris as well as in Milan.

In fact he found another, if secondary, tempest in a certain Alberte de Rubempre, whom he christened Madame Azur because she lived in Rue Bleue. Madame Azur was delightfully stormy, but she had one unfortunate failing. She had a habit of falling in love with her friends' friends, and before long she joined Menta in the limbo of lost loves.

* * *

Paris, Dominique gradually discovered, was full not only of romantic ladies but of other good things too. Good companionship for one thing, and bohemians who could match wit with wit, and

meeting places where one could be as mad as one wished, and a kaleidoscopic society of cosmopolitans camped like Arabs in the streets of the one city in the world which tolerated any folly as long as it was a good natured one.

He soon built himself a circle of friends as iconoclastic as he: Koreff, the Prussian doctor who used magnetism and doubtless did a bit of espionage work on the side and who might have stepped out of some tale of Hoffman; Sutton Sharpe, the English lawyer, who spent a month defending widows and orphans in London and then a week end spending the proceeds in Paris; di Fiore the Neapolitan, who looked like a museum Jupiter, and had, much to Beyle's envy, been condemned to death in Italy in the most romantic way; and Andrea Cornea, descendant of the Venetian doges, poor, bald and drunken, and often to be found trying in vain to find his way home in the gardens of the Palais Royal.

Then there were Frenchmen. Delacroix was of them: Delacroix who was a red flag to the Philistines in the Salon, and whose pictures according to Ingres smelled faintly of sulphur. Lingay was there, writing political pamphlets in favor

of each successive ministry. And Victor Jacquemont who looked like a half starved cockerel and was exempt from human failings save for an unworthy envy of Napoleon. And there was Merimée.

"Who is that bad little boy with the pug nose and the naughty eye?" said Stendhal, the first time he saw him. And: "Who is that fat little man with black sideburns and a head like an Italian butcher?" said Merimée at the same moment.

And so, rather distrustfully, they met: only to discover that the bad little boy and law student had a mind like a rapier, and that the fat little man had the originality of genius, and forthwith to strike up a curious, embattled friendship. Their minds were drawn together, but never their hearts: they crossed rapiers continually and called a truce only to join together in attacking some other unfortunate. They had many things in common: a taste for teasing the dull, a love of literature, an interest in mankind. But their temperaments were as far apart as the two poles. They never loved each other, but they respected each

other, and they kept between themselves a complete intellectual honesty.

There were parties and expeditions aplenty. Sometimes a picnic took them out to Meudon, and every week the whole crowd gathered at the Frères Provençaux, eight or ten of them in all, and sat down to worthy food and fine old wine. No intellectual, they decided, should disdain the fruits of this earth: on the contrary, he should enjoy them till such time as gout shall teach him the painful lesson of caution. Those were wonderful dinners. Wonderful wits and witticisms, anecdotes and arguments, such arguments that bourgeois at neighboring tables looked at them with horror and waited for the fist fights that never followed. Stendhal, Merimée, Delacroix, Koreff, Sutton Sharpe—the best of the dinner was the diners. Passers-by on the Boulevard de Gand late in the evening would turn to watch them as they went by, still joyfully arguing. There is no place for talk like Paris.

* * *

Mathilda had not vanished from his mind, but she was fading into a sweet, sad phantom. He felt only an autumnal sadness when he learned of her

death in 1825, and knew that consumption had ravaged her pale face till she seemed more than ever a marble statue lying on a tomb. Her friends will forget her, he thought: the minds of the living turn from cemeteries. She will be as utterly vanished from the world as if she had never walked upon it. But I will always love Mathilda. I will water her memory till it is ever green in my thoughts, and keep vigil before her image till the end of my days.—So charming a thought was very consoling to him, and Mathilda thenceforth took her place among the angels.

Travel of any kind continued to intrigue him, and he visited England shortly after his break with Menta. He also went back twice to Italy, and one of his visits proved memorable.

His first trip was in November, 1823. When he left Paris, the city was in the grip of cold and fog. When he reached Genoa the orange trees were smiling in the sun. He was content to travel as a tourist—a tourist, in Italy which he always considered his native country by right of predilection!—and as he saw the familiar towns all the forgotten exhilaration of his youth swept over him. He gloated over the museums in Florence

and worshiped at the tomb of Alfieri. He mixed with writers in the studios of the Swiss Vieusseux, who looked like an owl and strove to weld all Italy into spiritual unity. He walked in the Corso in Rome, and listened to the strange Boccaccian tales of the pharmacist Manni among his red and green glass jars. And he laughed at young Frenchmen, dutifully studying Italian art and vowing with a yawn that it was admirable. And he stayed sensibly far from Milan.

But three years later on his second voyage he was not so sensible. His beloved city drew him like a magnet, and he circled around it in narrowing spirals, watching it out of the corner of his eye and bearing down on it with an assumed nonchalance.

He went to the other end of Italy first—Naples, and the Isle of Ischia, where he lived among peasants and threw grain to the hens in an idyllic interlude. From Naples he went naturally to Rome. And from Rome he went equally naturally to Florence, where he was cordially received by the French chargé and snubbed by his wife, Madame de Lamartine. From Florence it was only a step to Ferrara, and half a step from Ferrara to Ven-

ice. Once he was in Venice, the only possible road back to France lay directly through Milan.

Tremulous with suppressed emotion, he found himself once more before the gates of his beloved city, and entered it with the audacity of the man who wakes not only his dead happiness but his sleeping grief.

It was the night of January 1, 1828. La Scala slept, and the Duomo, and the Casa d'Adda, which had once sheltered a Second Lieutenant from the Sixth Dragoons. Piazzo Belgioso, sacred to Mathilda, was ominous and chilly in the fog.

But one body of men were still awake in the city, and they were the Austrian police. An employee in the Passport Bureau read the name of Henri Beyle, looked keenly at the tourist before him, and opened a notebook. So Stendhal-Beyle, notorious character, open enemy of throne and altar, avowed liberal, dared enter Milan and show his impudent face! Stendhal-Beyle, arch spirit of evil and vile calumniator dared to make formal application for a permit to spend two weeks in Milan, declaring he voyaged but for health and pleasure!

The Director of Police, as soon as he was noti-

fied, ordered him expelled forthwith from the city, and took quill pen in hand to notify his chief, the Governor of the Lombardo-Venetian Kingdom.

The Director, he reported, had warned the irreverent, subversive Frenchman to leave Milan, in spite of the man's protestations that he knew nothing of any one called Stendhal, and in spite of his threats that he would procure a justification for himself upon his return to Paris, and cause the Austrian Embassy there not only to avenge his honor but to permit him to come back and settle in Milan. Such protestations, which were given with a suspicious lack of conviction in any case, had not deceived the police for a moment.

"The said Beyle left the evening of the day on which he had been warned to leave Milan, and took the road to France via the Simplon. As a further proof of an uneasy conscience, he evidently did not dare to protest to Your Excellency against the order we imposed upon him.

"The surveillance exercised on him during his short stay in Milan did not justify any particular inference . . . He went to the Scala in the evening.

"I have taken steps to make sure that should

the said Beyle attempt to cross our borders in the future, he will be forbidden the right of entry . . ."

There was nothing whatever to be done about it. Beyle had to content himself with life in Paris, which was not very hard to do. For there is a good deal to be said for life in Paris. A swarm of new ideas are born there every morning to die at dusk. You have but to open your eyes and ears to be a wise man—or to seem to be. The natives ask nothing of you but that you have wit. It is no place to vegetate: only if you love life, should you go there to feel its fever. Only there will you find an entire population aroused by the success of a book or the failure of a play. Only there will you hear them joke about everything in life but literary style, which alone is sacred. There, more than anywhere else, will you find in the most modest homes, the noblest feasts of reason.

Stendhal, who could digest several cubic metres of ideas a day, breathed the Parisian air with delight. There was one place in Paris in particular where he could always be sure of finding new spiritual sustenance, and that was in the apartment of Étienne Delécluze. Étienne Delécluze was

a novelist, historian and art critic for *Les Débats*. He was poor and his rooms in the Rue Gaillon were up exactly ninety-five steps, with a panorama of chimney pots to reward you when you got there: but all good conversationalists gathered there on Sundays, and Wednesdays a few intimates came back again. They rewrote all French literature as politicians remake the map of Europe, after dinner.

They were romantics, of course, but not in the genre of Hugo, de Vigny, Sainte-Beuve, and the others who met at M. Nodier's over near the Arsenal. Theirs was a different school, boasting no stage properties in the shape of romances, ballades, lyricism, Catholicism, medievalism, poetic dramas, red waistcoats or flowing locks. They were romanticists simply because they were liberals, and because literature should follow the changing political styles instead of clinging to the ideals of Louis XIV. Classic literature, they said, was the literature that pleased our grandparents. Romantic literature is the literature that reflects the French soul in 1825.

Every Wednesday night, Dominique would climb the ninety-five steps and fall panting on a

sofa, while the habitués, Stapfer, J. J. Ampère, Viollet-le-Duc, Merimée, Charles de Remusat, Vitet, the elder Bertin, Theodore McClerq and the rest, wondered if he were in a good or bad humor, and if he would be unbearable or fascinating.

There were usually fireworks. Someone, for instance, once mentioned Joseph de Maistre, and Dominique leaped instantly to arms:

"*Beyle:* 'M. de Maistre is a good enough writer, but a scoundrel.'

"*Cerclet:* 'Why do you say that?'

"*Beyle:* 'Doesn't he always start talking about conscience? What is conscience, I ask you? Only a hypocrite deliberately trying to make idiots his dupes would invoke the name of conscience nowadays.'

"The remark being ignored by his audience who dreaded a useless argument, Beyle went on:

" 'All right, if you all believe in conscience, let's forget what I just said and go on to another point. I myself have seen water composed and decomposed, and seen it with my own eyes, undeniably, irrefutably: so have many other people in Europe. What am I to think of M. de Maistre, who denies it in the very first pages of his book, and in so do-

ing lies like a coward and a rogue? Anyone who tries to deceive his readers is a rogue and a scoundrel.' "

Once well started there was no stopping him, and he would talk on with gestures and imprecations. He reminded Delécluze of some pirate at a Flemish table d'hôte, trying to enliven the bovine customers around him by shooting two curving horse pistols here and there under the table till they leaped to life. At the end of half an hour, Beyle would end in a peroration to the effect that there were only rogues and idiots in the world, present company always excepted, and leave therewith.

But once back in his lodgings in the Hôtel des Lillois, across from the Bibliothèque Royale, he had to admit to himself that only in Paris would he have been able to spend the evening in such perfect company. In Germany, he thought, ten friends who got together to talk literature would soar irresistibly on the wings of philosophical thought until they lost themselves in the clouds, and wandered happily in metaphysical mists. In England such spiritual communism would be impossible, for any duke would think himself more

intelligent than any bourgeois by right of birth. In Italy such a discussion, grown a trifle pedantic, would also grow acrimonious: personal jealousies would wake, and the meeting end inevitably in a minor battle fought out with sarcastic sonnet sequences from one combatant to another. Only in Paris were their jousts and tourneys fought before skilled judges and won on technical points, with thrusts into self-love given and taken with a smile, because they were all in the game.

But even in Paris, he did not have enough to live on. And even in Paris he was known only as a man who would have liked to be a writer.

CHAPTER XII

Julien Sorel

STENDHAL—not the mirthful Louis Alexandre César Bombet, but the secret, melancholy Stendhal—sat down at his desk to write Sainte-Beuve a note thanking him for a copy of his latest book, the *Consolations.*

"Any work of art," he wrote, "is a ticket in the lottery of fame. Africa is forgotten and Petrarch lives but in his sonnets. Let us therefore write voluminously . . ."

He had put many tickets in the lottery since his return from Milan. They lay beside him on the desk, little ships sent out to sail for glory and come back without her. *Love; Racine and Shakespeare;* the *Life of Rossini; Walks around Rome; Armance.* He came back to them again and again; criticized them, polished and repolished. But so far none of them had borne the winning number.

It was strange. He had woven so much of a

man's life into them: so many of his happy days in Milan, where every month was a month of Spring and every year went round without a winter, and so much of his life after he lost Mathilda, twilight without a dawn, and winter without springtime. He had breathed life and death and love into the pages, and still none of them bore the winning number.

The times were propitious for new writers. Old stand-bys were forgotten and ancient glories bankrupt in 1825. Booksellers' windows were crowded with new names, destined to become ancient glories in their turn. And yet none of Stendhal's tickets bore the winning number.

It was very strange. He had, alone of all his contemporaries, washed off the dust-stained picture known as Italy and restored it to all its pristine color. He had gone out alone with light step and open heart to conquer lands a thousand times described and never before realized. He had, like any great explorer, reached the Heavenly Isles and brought back stories of a primitive race where all the ancient energy of man still burned brightly.

And in his own country he had not been idle. He had come to the aid of the younger school in

their battle with the old, and brought them munitions in the shape of epigram, argument and definition. He had trod with the best of them on the revered toes of the French Academy, defied the authorities, harassed the professors, and thrown the world of letters into tumult. And yet he bought no winning lottery ticket.

And most significant of all, he had taught France an age-old truth and one she had too often forgotten of late: that you should feel rather than analyze a work of art; that perfection lies not in the absence of defect but in the presence of vitality and strength; and that a book is not an abstraction but a living being.

And still the public turned their faces away and the publishers their noses up. He suffered not only neglect but humiliation. He never forgot the time when with all due humility he asked the elder Mongié for a report on his latest book *Love*. *Love* was nearer his heart than any of his books. It breathed the spirit of Mathilda and was dedicated to her. It analyzed the birth and growth of passion in the human heart, and analyzed it, so Stendhal believed, with great profundity. A human soul lay bare within it. Would it bring back

the coveted prize of glory?—All the injustice and stupidity of life was in the elder Mongié's reply.

> "Monsieur:
>
> Much as I would have liked to have reached the point at which I could report to you on the returns from the sale of your book *Love,* I begin to believe that it is a point which I shall never reach. I have sold less than forty copies of the book, and I might say of it as of the *Sacred Poems* of Pompignan: 'Sacred they must be, for no one will touch them.'
>
> I have the honor to be, etc.
>
> F. Mongié, senior,
> Publisher."

Stendhal sat stricken in his lodgings. At that very hour his enemy M. Auger, Perpetual Secretary to the French Academy, was eating a hearty dinner; M. Andrieux was pinning on a dozen decorations with his tremulous hands to go dine with the King; M. Villemain, Chief of the Book Division in the Ministry of the Interior and Public Advocate to the Council of State, was polishing his article for *Les Débats* or reviewing his lecture course, which all Paris attended. All of them were smug with place, money and honor. All of them were intellectual pygmies compared to Stendhal,

and he knew it. Yet even his friends were barely aware that Dominique wrote books: and Merimée, though he read them, was drunk on the success of his *Gazul and Guzla,* and found them inferior.

Friends of his who sold things to eat and drink grew rich. People who sold things for feet, bodies and heads grew rich. People who dealt in money always kept enough as it went by to build themselves snug little palaces. Only those who dealt in food and clothing for the mind grew poor. Had he entered the bank with Mante, or accepted the post of director of the provisioning of Paris, as Comte Beugnot had asked him to, he might have had more than one poor room and more possessions than a few pawned books and closely written manuscripts.

There were compensations, of course, subtle pleasures unknown to bankers. But life is gray without some form of intoxication: women, wine or glory can alone give it color. And Stendhal cared nothing for wine: he looked askance at de Musset, drinking himself under the table at the Frères Provençaux. The time for great loves was passed, and could not come again. And worldly ambition filled him with distaste. What was there

left but glory? He was a middle-aged man, and time was flying. Youth can well live in a provisional future, an iridescent mist where nothing is sure, not even grief; where defeats are fleeting and pleasures only the presages of deeper joys. Youth is a creditor to the future. Not so maturity: at Dominique's age, men can no longer afford to wait, and sometimes they are bitterly aware that they have waited too long. Their whole perspective changes, and the landscape of their days is darkened. The only light on the horizon is the faint gleam of glory: and they cannot be sure that glory will ever come.

* * *

Lottery tickets and more lottery tickets. He sighed, and set to work to finish the new book on his hands. It was a novel, his first novel. Novels might strike the popular fancy, he thought. In any case, he must not let himself tire of the task. *Armance* had failed: never mind, they might like *Rouge et Noir*. To work!

"A hunter fired his gun in a forest, and as his prey fell, sprang forward to catch it. In so doing his shoe struck against an ant hill six inches high, destroyed it, and scattered the ants and their eggs

far and wide. Even the most profoundly philosophical of those ants could never understand or analyze that titantic black form which was the hunter's boot, coming down from heaven with such incredible rapidity, and preceded by horrifying noises and streams of red fire.

"So it is with human death, eternity and life: all of them highly simple things for anyone with faculties vast enough to understand them.

"An ephemeral fly is born at nine in the morning on a long summer's day and dies at five in the afternoon. How could it understand the word night?"

And there was his central idea, clearly expressed. All his concepts were crystal in his mind, and words came to him without seeking. His philosophy was plain: no one can hope to penetrate the infinite night that encircles us and the eternal ignorance in which our human ant hill dwells, not even scientific study of cause and effect or attempts in adaptation to the universal order. Our ephemeral fly's life has only one sure good, and that is—life itself. Pale existences, dragged out in anemia and languor, are non-existences. Vital existences, lives of fierce energy, have reached the

highest stage of human development. A wise man, a man who realizes that he is suspended in nothingness and possesses nothing surely but the moments given him to live, uses his energy to drink the joy of being alive. He nourishes his own will to live which is the will to triumph. Obstacles only increase his strength. Social conventions, moral precepts, and the law of the Civil Code are only means invented by the weak to paralyze the strong. There are no such things as crimes: there are only vigorous acts. He who has exalted and magnified his life with great emotions has made good use of the little moment of vitality conceded him by the great mystery, and can die content.

That was the thought which Stendhal wished to leave springing in the minds of men. That was the thought back of the hero who woke to life through the lengthy pages, written every day in a more weary hand. That was the thought back of the immortal Julien Sorel.

He put him first in the basest strata of society, and then drew him up gradually through higher and higher classes till he reached the heights of power, riches and love; and in his upward course,

he bade him trample on every superstition of the vulgar—religion, morality and law. Julien Sorel was the secret Stendhal: he had Stendhal's innermost emotions and desires. He was a refuge for Stendhal's bruised ego. Julien Sorel was the son of a peasant. He became an instructor, then a seminarist, then an abbé, then Secretary to a marquis, then a dabbler in politics, a noble, a rich man, an Ambassador and a statesman. He constructed his own life as an artist does his masterpiece, after a preconceived vision of perfection. He despised riches, nobles and priests, yet used them all to arrive at his supreme end, the possession of the earth and the domination of mankind: one individual liberty built on the enslavement of all others. And Julien Sorel was also a great lover and so handsome that women worshiped him—for what would his life have been worth without love? Two women in particular divided his life between them. One of them symbolized feminine pride and the other feminine tenderness, for there are two great pleasures in love: the possession of a tender soul and the conquest of a proud one. After such a life, so perfect in its successes, only one further triumph was possible to the hero. He fell

into the sort of paroxysm that leads to magnificent crime, and finished his days in the kind of emotional frenzy that exalts life above itself. Julien Sorel committed a beautiful murder and died dramatically on the scaffold.

" 'What prospects I see before me! Colonel of Hussars in wartime, Secretary in some legation in peace time. Then Ambassador, for I know my way about . . . and even if I didn't the son-in-law of the Marquis de Mole need fear nothing . . . Any stupidity would be pardoned me, or rather accounted a merit in my position. Then a distinguished man, leading a brilliant life in Vienna or London . . .

" 'No. Not quite that, Monsieur. A condemned man who will be guillotined in exactly three days . . .' "

Guillotined. Well, what of it? Julien Sorel could easily have won a pardon by humiliating himself before the rabble that condemned him, and imploring pity. He preferred to insult it, and die in a bloody apotheosis. Never was there a more splendid life, nor a more gorgeous death.

Julien Sorel was an astounding hero. He was so vital he escaped from the grasp of his own

creator and had to be forced back into the story to fulfill his destiny. He was an unchained force. The French of 1830, eunuchs that they were, thought Stendhal, could never understand him: he was too strong a wine for their spoiled palates. And they could never forgive the picture of 19th century French life he painted. Well: let the book be above the crowd. He didn't care. All he asked was justice from the connoisseurs,—and they, alas, were as spoiled as the mob by the romanticist hysteria or else still a century and a half behind time in the cold perfection of classicism.

And so Stendhal worked, considered, hoped and doubted.

And as he worked, a bitterness crept into his heart. He painted Mathilde de la Mole, the superb mistress, and bade her take the gory head of Julien Sorel in both her hands and kiss its brow. He painted energy, and passion, and splendid crimes. And all the while he himself lived a completely bourgeois life. He sang the joy of vengeance—but had he killed Pietragrua? Had he killed Mathilde? He dreamed of the life of a Renaissance artist, leaving his atelier after creating a Gorgon or Perseus to slip a dagger in his

rival on some dark street—and he was afraid to wake the concierge when he came home late. He dreamed of pillaged cities, sacked convents, fire and rape—and he paid his rent like a government clerk. He sang of bandits and warmed his hands at a salon fire.

And from the bitter contradiction between his dream and the fact sprang the strange wistfulness throughout the *Rouge et Noir*. Life had not given Beyle the vital happiness he craved, and he no longer hoped for it. The experiment had been made, and it had failed. He had lost his high, perfect ambition, which had thought to possess everything in life: liberty, riches and love. He clung to the fragments left him. And eagerly, obstinately, he wove his vanished dream into his art. His books, which had always been lyric outpourings of his ego, became his refuge, his hope, his very self. He wrote the life he could never live himself.

CHAPTER XIII

"I Am the Grasshopper Who Sang All Summer . . ."

STENDHAL had a new trade. Rather an amusing one, in a way, for it was fun to see every new book published in France or Italy. And it was fun to cultivate mental muscles which could keep abreast of the publications, judge them at a glance, pick out their core, and drop them only to seize on more promising ones. It was an impressive trade, too; for in a way it is like being a tyrant among artists to be allowed to judge and execute, to condemn the pretentious imbecile and snatch the man of wisdom from the shade of neglect into the sun of popular approval.

And yet it was sad to write pages every day that would be forgotten on the morrow; sad to feel oneself lost in the very number of the new productions, never to have time to polish a phrase or round out an idea. And sadder still to write

under pseudonyms and to be in reality a comic tyrant, without visible crown.

For Stendhal was now a critic to others' books while he awaited the coming of glory to his own. He read hundreds of books and wrote instant judgments on them. He attacked undeserved reputations and never flattered them. He found pretexts for side excursions into his own ideas, chances for fantasy and time to expose humbugs. He never lost an opportunity to give a passing dig at someone he hated—and he hated a lot of people.

"M. Hugo is the real poet laureate of the ultra school. He has a talent somewhat like that of Young in his *Night Thoughts,* and added to it a taste for meretricious exaggeration which has won him much success. No one can deny, of course, that he has a certain technical skill in writing verse. Unfortunately, he is an unfailing soporific to the mind."—"M. Victor Hugo is not an ordinary man, but he would like to be really extraordinary. Frankly, his *Orientales* bore me. And you?"—"M. Hugo, who has been overpraised, is not really successful, at least in the *Orientales.*"—"M. Victor Hugo's tragedy *Hernani,* rather clumsily imitated from *Two Gentle-*

men of Verona and other plays in the manner of the divine Shakespeare, is sure to stir up a good deal of commotion when it is produced at the *Théâtre Français* the 6th of February."—"Two things have never agreed with me: champagne and *Hernani.*" . . . They met once, the critic and the poet, and, so Sainte-Beuve tells us, edged around each other like two alley cats making velvet paws.

So far so good. Had he written directly for French journals and influenced French opinion, he might really have enjoyed his life. But there was a curious side to the situation. He could not find a way of dealing directly with his own people, and had to sell the best of his productions to English magazines: to the *Monthly Magazine,* the *London Magazine,* the *Athenæum* and the *Paris Monthly Review.* His courageous thinking, his unflagging enthusiasm, and his fine, caustic prose were translated into English, and then, often, back into French again—and his ideas went the round without his name accompanying them.

There was another fly in the ointment, even more distressing from a practical point of view. Whatever outsiders might think, London and

Paris papers did not pay their contributors fancy prices. Not only that, but they paid them slowly, and sometimes not at all. An article sufficed to buy a new tie or hat. But any author who attempted to live on his prose in the current papers would eat crusts and sleep in the Halles.

He longed to found a paper under the title of *"Ariastarque, or the Guide to Readable Books,"* with *'The Naked Truth'* as motto. But a paper needs capital, and he had none.

The worst of it all was that he could not wait to be intellectually honest. He could not wait for new ideas to descend upon him; he had to force them to come at set hours. The presses will not wait for genius. His reading was embittered by the necessity for finding points for an article in every chapter; his intellectual life was in chains. As he left the parties at Delécluze's to go down the famous ninety-five steps, the rest of the company could hear him murmur:

"I have an idea."

Or perhaps in a depressed voice:

"I can think of nothing."

He was rich only the first few days of the month, and dined at the Frères Provençaux for

the price of two, three or even four articles, according to the menu and the date of the wine. Acquaintances seeing him there took him for an idler: he was really a bondservant to his trade. He labored all day to be free in the evening, and if he took an hour off in the daytime, he had to work at night. The dandy was a pauper, the genius was doing hack work, and the vain aristocrat sold copy at cheap rates and without glory to foreigners.

The situation was too much for him finally, and with a sigh he decided that it would be easier to have a job. A life of liberty was heavier than a life of chains. There were several jobs he would have liked to have. There was the position of Head of Archives in the Police Department or in the National Archives. There was Assistant Verifier of Arms in the College of Heralds—a pleasant job, consisting of assisting a man who had nothing whatever to do. Of lesser desirability, but still agreeable enough, was the job of Assistant in the Manuscript Division in the Royal Library, and Stendhal would rather have enjoyed the conventional task of concealing books from those who want to read them. But the Library would have

none of him: they felt it would be bringing a wolf into the sheepfold. Scholastic ants have no love for social grasshoppers, and Stendhal had sung all summer. Now, they said, he could dance.

The one thing that could have helped Stendhal at this juncture happened: a Revolution. Parisians were not the cowards he had accused them of being. Not content with caricaturing Charles X they took to arms, and in July, 1830, dragged down the white flag and ran up the tricolor. Stendhal went out into the streets and saw the barricades built before the *Théâtre Français* and heard the bullets whiz by him. The King was thrown out of France, and another one brought in—a less arrogant King, with an old umbrella under his arm. The Liberals were on top, and Stendhal was an 'in' instead of an 'out.'

So his friends went to work and pulled wires in the government. Mareste helped him, and Destutt de Tracy, and various women he had known. M. de Mole was interviewed and reasoned with. M. de Mole was the Foreign Minister, and Beyle knew Italian affairs backward and forward. He had even been called into consultation by the French government when a new Pope was to be

elected and they were uncertain which cardinal to favor. A fat little post in Italy would be just the thing for Beyle.

M. le Comte de Molé gave M. Beyle the Consulate in Trieste: thinking, perhaps, that if it was not quite Italy it was the next best thing. He also gave him fifteen thousand francs a year salary. Riches!

Beyle gulped with pleasure, said good-by to his friends, visited the government, vowed to make a model consul, swore he would hold his tongue and promised to respect throne and altar. And forthwith he set out by short stages: first to Lyon, then to Nice where he visited his new colleague the French consul and observed with satisfaction that his chief duty seemed to be pruning his rose bushes; then to Genoa, and then to Milan. And the Viennese police did not dare forbid him to enter this time, for he represented H. M. King Louis Philippe, ruler of France by the will of God and the majority. On the contrary they treated him with the satisfying respect due to established officialdom.

As he drew near Milan he passed various people he knew on the road. A youth, first, urging on

a bony nag and carrying an awkward sabre in an awkward way. An ungainly youth, but not a ridiculous one, and with an expression of confidence on his unlined face. Then came an Auditor and Inspector of the Buildings to the Crown, a plumpish man, toying nervously with the fat gold chain on his watch, and urging on his postilion, for love awaited him at the end of his voyage. After him hurried a strange man who had the look of an escaped prisoner and seemed quite drunk on freedom and happiness. And in the rear of the procession crept an elderly personage with grizzled hair and an anxious step.

In vain did he bid the ghosts stay: they fell behind as he went on. But before they vanished they asked a few questions of him. "Why do you take to this familiar road?"—"Since chance, which sends all men along all roads, wishes it to be so."—"And do you come back with pleasure?"—"Naturally."—"With the great joy you once had in the voyage?"—"No."—"And do you believe in happiness?"—"A little."—"In life?"—"Yes: always."

PART III

HENRI BRULARD

CHAPTER XIV

Trieste

Stopover in Milan

Count von Sedlnitzky, Prefect of Police in Vienna, to Chancellor Metternich.

Vienna, November 30, 1830

I beg leave to call Your Highness's attention to the enclosed report from the Director General of Police in Milan, Baron Torresani, of the 22d and 23d of this month, in which you will perceive that a certain Frenchman, Henri Beyle, who was summarily expelled from Milan and the Austrian States in 1828 as having written various incendiary books dangerous to the Austrian government under the alias of Baron de Stendhal, has recently returned to Milan en route for Trieste, where he has been delegated by the current royalist government in France to the post of Consul General. He has now continued on to Trieste with the condonance of the Governor of Lombardy though his passport was not furnished with a visa by the Royal Austrian Embassy in Paris.

In order to emphasize the depth of this Frenchman's hostility both to the Austrian

government and to the principles on which it is founded and the incendiary character of all his doctrines, I have also taken the liberty of forwarding to your Highness the final judgment of the Censorship on three of his works: *The History of Italian Painting,* Librairie Didot, Paris, 1817; *Rome, Naples and Florence,* Librairie Delaunay, 1817; and *Walks around Rome,* Paris, 1829.

I cannot but be convinced that your Highness will most assuredly refuse the exequatur to such a doubly suspect character as Henri Beyle should the French Government go so far as to ask for his recognition in the post of Consul General at Trieste. I therefore beg to be informed of Your Highness's orders, and respectfully urge that he consider whether this Frenchman, once expelled from Austrian territory, should be tolerated at all in Trieste until the expiration of this affair: and what measures, in that case, we should take in regard to him.

Sedlnitzky.

Consular Dignity

Henri Beyle, French Consul General at Trieste, to Baron de Mareste in Paris.

Trieste, December 4, 1830

Like Augustus, I wished for Empire, but when I wished I did not know its nature. I am dying of boredom, which is aggravated by the fact that everybody is most kind and

pleasant to me. Having had the misfortune to have a father whose estates were eaten up in foolishness, I suppose I must learn to accustom myself to this complete lack of intellectual intercourse.

I have been terribly careful not to make a joke since I have been on the island. I haven't said one amusing thing, and I haven't even seen anyone's sister. In short I have been a model of official discretion, and I am nearly dead of boredom.

Trieste, December 26, 1830

Never have I been so keenly aware of the misfortune of picking a bankrupt for a father. If I had dreamed that my father was already ruined in 1814, I would certainly have learned to pull teeth or argue or preside in court. You have reached the depths when you are sick with fear of losing a place in which you are equally sick with boredom.

My entire life is symbolized in my dinner. My high rank here in the first place demands that I eat it alone. In the second place, it demands that I be served with no fewer than twelve courses: an enormous capon, impossible to carve even with the fine English knife I bought here for less than it would cost in London; a superb bit of sole, which they forget to cook, after the native custom; a quail killed not earlier than the afternoon before—they would think it was dangerously decayed if they kept it two

days; rice soup, flavored with seven or eight saucersful of garlic and rice. I wish I could describe it all to you. It is the custom of the country: they treat me like a king, and I am sure the nice old innkeeper, who never passes me in the corridor without stopping short, uncovering, and bowing to the floor, makes nothing on my dinner, which costs me exactly four francs, two sous. My lodging is six francs two sous.

My position of bird on the tree (Merimée does not understand that gentle metaphor) prevents me from getting a cook. I am so dyspeptic that I have taken refuge in a diet of coddled eggs—I invented them about a week ago and am quite proud of my ingenuity.

Tell Madame Azur all my troubles, and tell her also if she knows mathematics to multiply my life by the evil of dining. The absence of a fireplace in this room nearly kills me; my fingers are freezing as I write you. In my other room, by way of variety, there is a stove big enough to give the huskiest Auvergnist a headache. . . .

To Madame Virginie Ancelot in Paris
Trieste, January 1, 1831

My news for January 1, 1831, madame, is that I am dying of cold and ennui.

I read only the *Quotidienne* and the *Gazette de France,* and the diet is making my mind thin. To live up to my position and

circumvent the disaster that overwhelmed me in Paris, I do not allow myself a single witticism. I am as honest and dull as Telemaque. Everyone looks up to me here. My God! What a dreary century we live in, and how it sweats and reeks of boredom.

I live in a state closely approaching the primitive. I finally rented a little country house: six rooms, all in all as big as your bedroom, which same resemblance is quite the only pleasant thing about them. There I vegetate in the midst of peasants who have only one religion, that of money. The loveliest local beauties are willing to adore me for a sequin. Eleven francs, sixty-three centimes. What the devil! The poor things are peasants and not society women. (That last is a tribute both to Truth and to any friends who may happen to see this letter.) If you can find it in your charitable heart to write to me, send the long letter—please let it be long as my deserts—to M. R. Colomb, 35 Rue Godot de Mauroy, the former tax collector.

I know naught of anything that goes on outside this delightful spot. You will realize how thoroughly my spirit is broken when I tell you that I am a faithful reader of the advertisements in the *Quotidienne*. If I ever meet any of the editors on the street in Paris, I am more than likely to strangle them on the spot. You may ask the explanation of this morbid desire for vengeance,

which your gentle spirit could never understand, from your gloomy and abstruse friend Merimée.

Amusements

To Baron de Mareste in Paris

You feel the nearness of Turkey in Trieste. The men wear full trousers, having no connection with the knee; or stockings; or bare thighs. Hats two feet in diameter and tams an inch deep. They are a handsome people, light on their feet and agile. I have talked to half a dozen of them, paying them in punch. They are good humored and only half civilized. Their barques smell horribly of putrid oil, and their speech is pure poetry. . . .

We have a gale here twice a week and a high wind five times. I call it a high wind when you have to hold your hat on with a deathlike grip, and a gale when you come near breaking your arm. I rose in the air completely for several feet the other day. A very sensible man last year found himself at one end of a small village; his home was at the other end, and he prudently spent the night at an inn rather than go against the wind. There were twenty legs or arms broken in 1830.

I am much preoccupied with my business here. It is a good honest business, I find, and delightfully paternal in its point of view. My correspondence is taken up at the moment

with the corn trade. Paris is not, as you might suppose, the center of the business: it flourishes, on the contrary, in Bannat. I went to Bannat to study it, and took a trip to Fiume. Fiume is the last outpost of civilization.

Uncertainty

To Baron de Mareste in Paris
Trieste, December 24, 1830

I have just this minute received a letter from M. le Marquis Maison, Ambassador to Vienna, stating that M. de Metternich has refused me my *exequatur* and ordered the Austrian Ambassador in Paris to protest against my appointment. I first thought in my misanthropy of saying nothing to anyone about it. M. le Marquis Maison's letter is dated the 19th and reached me to-day.

But I changed my mind and am writing the friends who have always stood by me. *Facta loquantur.* I am writing Mme. Victor de Tracy, among others. M. de Tracy was once le comte Sebastiani's aide-de-camp and is still a warm friend of his; he may be able to do something for me. I am begging Madame Victor, my debt to whom you know, to *decide* my problem for me.

Without being too specific, I feel more and more convinced that with my forty-seven years and failing vitality, *heat* is an essential element in my health and happiness. Palermo, perhaps? Naples, or even

Cadiz. But for the love of heaven, not the north! I am not going into these details with Mme. de Tracy, merely begging her to *decide*.

M. le Comte d'Argout was my friend for ten years, but one day I told him that having a *peerage* in the family blood made the eldest son an idiot. What a break!

I was overcome with relief and astonishment when my appointment first went through. But now I find the port in which my barque has taken refuge is exposed to the north wind. . . .

Epilogue

Count Sebastiani, Foreign Minister, to Henri Beyle, Consul of France in Civita Vecchia.

Monsieur:

I have the honor to inform you that His Majesty the King has felt it to be for the good of the service to delegate you as French Consul in Civita Vecchia, and that His Majesty has in the same decree, dated the fifth instant, designated M. Levasseur as your successor in Trieste. M. Levasseur is now preparing to proceed to Trieste immediately. You will have the goodness to await the arrival of your successor before leaving your post, monsieur, and entrust to him all Chancellery papers in the consulate according to the regular procedure. I beg to inform

you at the same time, monsieur, that I have forwarded your commission to the Royal Embassy in Rome, directing the Ambassador to forward it to you at Civita Vecchia as soon as he shall have procured the exequatur of the Pontifical Government.

His majesty has no doubt of the zeal, etc.

H. Sebastiani, Foreign Minister.

CHAPTER XV

Civita Vecchia

Baron de Vaux was discharged from his post in Civita Vecchia, and all because he took the pontifical emblem off the door of the Consulate to have it repainted, and in the interim raised the tricolor. The Governor of Civita Vecchia had seen the flag with horror and complained to the Cardinal Secretary of State, and the Cardinal had complained in a shocked way to the French Embassy and the French Embassy had written in disgust to Paris. Baron de Vaux was humiliated, and doubly humiliated when he handed over the keys of power to a parvenu, an Austrian suspect, and a diplomatic amateur.

The new consul, on the contrary, arrived in the best of spirits with his hat cocked and his cane describing jaunty parabolas. *Ogni malo non viene per nuocere*—not every evil evil brings. He was now delighted that Metternich had refused him his *exequatur*. He would have inevitably died of

ennui in Trieste in the course of another year. Now, thank God, a new régime began. Thrice blessed curiosity! He had a whole new country to discover.

The consul formally took possession of his post, the gunboat Alerte in the harbor dipped its flag and fired a salute, and Baron de Vaux slunk away into obscurity. Stendhal began to rule his kingdom.

His first official duty was to buy a handsome blue suit with embroidery eighteen lines wide, according to the regulations. His next was to put a bicorn hat frothing with white plumes on his head. His next was to go, thus attired, to pay his respects to Cardinal Galeffi, the Governor of the City. The Cardinal was a little old man with shrewd eyes, and a worn red coat and waistcoat. He was very polite to the new consul, and the consul in return went devoutly to mass on national feast days, and dutifully admired the ensuing fireworks in the evening from the place of honor. He also illumined the consulate not only with Venetian lanterns but torches, regardless of expense. Natives, as he knew, judged all men but particularly consuls, by their manner of spending. They

had seen too many titles come and go to have much faith in them.

Henri decided instantly that career men were shamefully ignorant of the country to which they were accredited. They seemed inevitably to remain in their own social circle, drinking tea, mixing with the nobility, and conversing only with empty heads. They were always the last to know what was the common gossip in town, and always were vastly surprised by it.

Beyle made up his mind that he was going to be a consul on a new plan. He talked to the hoi polloi and listened to them, and collected information like a magpie. He was going to show the foreign service what could be done.

The Foreign Office in Paris began to be astonished by the arrival of various dispatches signed by Beyle and drawn up on the road from Trieste to Civita Vecchia. They were lengthy and profound dispatches, telling the Foreign Office exactly what to think about the political situation in Italy, especially in Florence, Modena and Ferrara. Before long the Foreign Office was also informed completely in regard to the pontifical government. Beyle was not niggardly in his contri-

butions to the Foreign Office's knowledge. He furnished them with an encyclopedia of facts. He nourished a secret conviction that some official would read them, be struck by the profundity of their reasoning, and show them to others. And some day those officials might come in power, and then. . . . Beyle was never averse to contemplating pleasant possibilities.

Italy was most obligingly in a tumultuous state at the moment and furnished endless material for consular reports. And the Papal States in particular were apparently not destined to be among those happy countries which have no history. The Romans were in continuous revolt, the Republicans in arms and about to attack the city, the Austrians seemed likely to intervene, and if they did the French of course would have to forestall them and disembark troops at Ancona. The latter prospect delighted Beyle who would have thoroughly enjoyed a few months in an army of occupation. As for Papal finance, it was in such a bad way in Rome that they had not more than two hundred and seventy écus in the Treasury. The army was ready to desert, and the starving inhabitants groaned as they were urged to lend

money to their government. There were three equally repellent ways open to the authorities: they might execute several hundred ringleaders, which they did not dare to do; or reign by force with a large standing army, which they had no means to do; or make concessions to the liberals, which they did not want to do. Dominique knew what Gregory XVI ought to do, but he had no means of telling him the things the Foreign Office was learning from its faithful consul.

Having demonstrated efficiency himself, he set to work on the consular agents under him in Ravenna, Ancona, Pesaro, Terracina and the rest, and bade them bestir themselves. They were no longer the possessors of happy sinecures; they now had an energetic master who expected great things of them. They were to keep their eyes and ears open and remember that H. E. the Minister of Foreign Affairs demanded prompt official communications. They were to have some sort of report ready to go every time the steamboat stopped by Civita Vecchia on its way to Marseille. Four times a month they had to prepare a paper, carefully divided under three headings: things seen by the official himself; things rumored

authoritatively in semi-official sources; simple rumors, and suspicions. . . .

Who in the devil, said the bureaucracy in Paris, is this blundering idiot who is undertaking to send in diplomatic dispatches over the head of his own ambassador? What does he mean by giving condescending advice to the Ministry? Is the man mad?

Oh, said they a minute later in comprehension, it's that same Stendhal who's always made so much trouble with his radicalism. M. de Molé had him under his protection when he was Minister of Foreign Affairs: but M. de Molé, thank goodness, is out of office.

Friends wrote Stendhal from Paris and tactfully advised him to keep quiet, say nothing and lie low. A consul is not quite an Ambassador.

* * *

So be it then, said Stendhal. He resigned himself to his paltry duties, and restrained his creative impulse. He twirled his thumbs in his office, glanced condescendingly at the few tourists who ventured as far as Civita Vecchia, returned them their passports with a disdainful look, and quarreled with the port authorities who were always

picking quarrels with French boats, to keep his spirits up.

He was full of vitality, and found every hour an empty cup to be filled with enjoyment: and life forced him to sit still and hear the flies buzz around an empty office. He hated idiots and lived with them. He hated his trade and feared to lose it. He was off his high horse, and on the ground.

Among other causes for dejection, was the fact that he had to live in daily communication with a certain Lysimaque Mercure Caftantioglou Tavernier. Tavernier was a Greek of sorts who had been around the consulate for some time and whom Count de Vaux had urged Beyle to discharge. Beyle had accordingly kept him on for the baser work, such as doing the accounts. He was astonished to find how much importance Paris seemed to attach to accounts. The home office was always criticizing them, and if they were a few hundreds out, treating the consul as if he were trying to make away with something. Tavernier seemed to take naturally to accounts, Beyle washed his hands of them, and everything went swimmingly for a while.

The first troubles came when the accounts came

back from Paris still annotated with sarcastic comments and Beyle began to wonder if he had made a happy choice of a treasurer. But he was in a delicate position, and not used to dealing with Lysimaque's type. It was all very well to say 'call him back to his duty.' Lysimaque seemed more inclined to call the Consul back to his. From having been filled with respectful enthusiasm and eagerness to serve his honor M. Beyle, Lysimaque began to accuse his chief of letting him do all the work and paying him abominably. He also began to demand a position as Vice-Chancellor and then Chancellor. And when Beyle refused, he wrote directly to the Ambassador over Beyle's head. (An abominable habit, said Beyle; one should always keep to the strict hierarchical order in diplomacy.)

The quarrel grew bitter in the narrow confines of the little office in Civita Vecchia, and a tragi-comedy ensued that Dominique would have been the first to laugh at had it only occurred in the consulate at Florence or Genoa. Lysimaque offered his resignation, which was accepted. The Ambassador then ordered Lysimaque to write a letter of apology and Beyle to accept that. Lysimaque wrote a letter of apology, and it was highly and

expertly insulting. Lysimaque thereupon had to re-write the letter, and the consul had to be officially satisfied. Lysimaque was thereupon unctuously polite, and as soon as his chief's back was turned, denounced him to the Ministry. Dark, unhappy, malicious Lysimaque was not the least of Beyle's worries.

He would have breathed a sigh of relief to be able to take off his embroidered coat, his feathered hat and his consular dignity. But he did not dare. He no longer dared. Something had broken in his spirit. His days of adventuring on the high seas were over, and he asked only to remain in port with his weather-beaten barque.

His next trouble was an unsatisfied and insatiable yearning for the cross of the Legion of Honor. "The cross! I must have the cross!" he said, time after time, in his letters to Mareste, Comte d'Argout, Madame Ancelot, Alberte de Rubempre. Through whatever channel it comes, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of the Interior of even the Department of Education, give me the cross! He was comfortably convinced that any Frenchman with a bankrupt father had a right to become a func-

tionary, and that any functionary had an inherent right to the Legion of Honor, especially if he happened to be a consul.

* * *

Civita Vecchia was that anomaly, an Italian city in which you could be depressed in spite of the Mediterranean. Its harbor was not alluring, in spite of Trajan's Tower—nobody could look at a tower all day without growing a bit tired of it. The houses looked like barracks. The empty streets were burnt dry with perpetual sunlight. Not the tiniest cloud broke the monotony of those empty azure skies. The whole countryside seemed a stretch of Africa, cluttered with official buildings.

The French consul was growing bored. The great game of throwing orange peel and raisin seeds into the sea began to pall on him, and he had no substitutes in the line of salons or dinner parties. The local bourgeois received nobody, and the commoners were for the most part either Neapolitan fishermen or Papal jail birds, whose company while interesting was impossible to a French official. He would have stopped eating at the expense

of his government very soon after any such contact, and he wanted to go on eating.

Harrowing as all that was, it was not the worst feature of his life in Civita Vecchia. The worst feature was that Dominique, the mortal enemy of priests and organized religion, was spending his days and nights in a city whose every stone reeked of Catholicism. Every Pope had come to Civita Vecchia and left a monument there. The place was cluttered with emblems and mementos, and overrun with inscriptions, plaques, keys, tiaras, voting balls and bees. Everywhere Dominique's cynical eye rested were names like Urban, Gregory, John, Innocent, Pius and Leon. The very air seemed sanctified, and the dignified old town seemed to laugh at Dominique.

He tried to find a refuge with the local liberals, and immediately got into trouble. His reputation was never sturdy enough to survive even a shadow of suspicion, and the police wrote annoyed reports to Rome that France had certainly picked a nice representative this time—always mixing with Republicans, whom as everybody knows are damned in the next world and quite possibly damned in this, and always hanging

around with dangerous characters like Donato Bucci the druggist, Benedetto Blasi and the Lawyer Manzi—the devil's own stepchildren. The Marseilles courier always brought the French consul packing cases of books, which were doubtless revolutionary pamphlets. The consul in turn sent off a voluminous correspondence to France, doubtless destined for refugee *carbonari.* They opened whatever letters they could get their hands on, and occasionally put an official on his trail. It reminded him rather pleasantly of Milan.

The heat was stifling, Lysimaque irritating and the city unbearably dull. He had absolutely nothing to do all day, and after he had read the consular archives and all the books he could lay his hands on and annotated them in the margin, he was through. His Paris friends were beginning to neglect him; their letters grew suspiciously shorter. It was hard for them to realize that the most trivial pamphlet from a bookseller's store on the quai would have been manna to him.

Oh Paris! Bookstalls, quais, sweet grayish light, chestnut trees in the Tuileries. . . . No one was ever bored there; no one ever lonely; no one ever solitary. He had never there had the feeling of

tremendous emptiness of soul. Merimée was there, and Maisonette, Mareste, Di Fiore and Madame Azur: all sparkling with wit and ready for conversation at all hours. It was there that cultivated men and understanding women gathered together for frank, friendly talk between equals: French talk, in which nothing is taken seriously but friendship and love. Poor Dominique! His friends, his equals, his companions were all in France.

The man had changed. Looking into his own mind, he admitted it; a trifle shamefacedly. The thing he once had worshipped, he no longer adored; he no longer even liked. In Paris he had cried like a querulous child for Italy, mother of happiness. In Italy, he pined and languished for France.

Even his inner, intellectual life seemed menaced in Civita Vecchia. His thoughts were weak and unoriginal; they needed spiritual sustenance. "So many cold natures, so many animate theorems would be perfectly happy in my place! But my soul is a fire which suffers when it cannot leap free in flame."

Dominique could never accomplish anything alone. He was immediately bored when he was

left to himself, and since boredom was the one evil he dreaded, life became unbearable to him. He was no brother to that man who destroyed and created a universe in his dutch oven without desiring a companion, nor to him who saw abysmal depths open before his very feet, nor to him who passed dreaming through the streets of Königsberg, tracing the real behind the outward seeming. This earth was all in all to Dominique; this earth and the fruits of this earth, and he believed in civilization, and all it has to offer to save man from the ennui of living with himself. He needed people to watch and be watched by, friends to provoke and inspire him, salons to pet him and hold up their hands in delighted horror: conversation, theaters, music, pictures and all the arts. His spirit quickened only with his intellectual equals. People were staggered if he made a witticism in Lilliputian Civita Vecchia. They liked and understood the customary banalities of every day life, and Beyle felt that there lay his greatest danger. He was terrified lest some day he find himself saying, with a smug smile,—"Yes, I think we shall have very pleasant weather today. Don't you?"

He overflowed in complaints and shouts for help. "I am nearly dead of ennui. There isn't a soul here I can talk to. . . . What a prospect lies before me! To spend the rest of my life in Civita Vecchia talking about money and hunting! . . ." —"I am languishing in boredom. . . . My ennui so crushes me that I no longer desire anything: I have reached the nadir of despair. . . . My mind grows duller every day: I have no one with whom to play the mental battledore and shuttlecock that is called wit. . . . I have reached the point of decay in which the very fictional characters I imagine seem absurd. In the desolation of ideas in which I am shipwrecked, my mind runs round and round in the same restricted circle. . . ."— "Think: I may see my friends in Paris only two or three times more before I die."—"My death will probably be from suffocation among these idiots."—"I am rapidly becoming a dullard here. What shall I do to amuse myself when I am old if I let the candle in the magic lantern die?"

He was a human ostrich when it came to eluding the Papal police, and suffered from a naïve conviction that he was completely disguised in the most transparent codes and noms de plume. When

he wrote an indiscreet letter he concealed 'religion' (a dangerous word) in the masterly word *'gion-reli.'* For the French *'Dieu'* he wrote the English 'God,' and 'king' instead of *'roi'* and smiled to think of how he had outwitted his censors. Equally ingenious was his subtle use of such words as Zotgui for Guizot, Lemo for Molé, and Gliebro for Broglie. And he reached the heights of Machiavellianism in substituting Naples for Rome, and Abeille for Civita Vecchia.

As for his aliases for himself, they were as varied as they were numerous. At one time he was, in rapid succession, Mequillet, Poverino, Champagne, Cotonet, Gaillard and Charrin. A little later he switched to Roger Durand, Justin Louart, George Simple, Horace Smith, A. L. Capello, P. F. Piouf, and L. C. G. Martin. Even more elaborate were Xaintrailles the Elder, Michael Sr., Olagnier de Voiron, and Isere. With a medieval flavor were Adolphe de Seyssel, Horace de Cluny, Choppier des Ilets, Van Eude de Molkirk, and Collinet de Gemme; and highly romantic were Don Grufo Papera, Timoléon Dubois, Timoléon Brenet, Timoléon Tisset, Timoléon Gaillard. Sometimes he was simply Chappuy, Caumartin,

Pabos, Danard, Fabrice, Alceste. Or, in a business-like way, he turned into M. Dimanche, M. Tempete, M. Cornichon, M. Chinchilla, and M. William Crocodile. That is by no means an exhaustive list of his disguises: his crazy imagination was inexhaustible, and names followed each other helter-skelter, and not entirely sanely. He was aristocratic at times, and took to Prince de Villiers, le Comte Change, le Comte de Chablis, le Baron Relguier, le Chevalier de Cutendre.

But his most ingenious invention, and the one most appropriate to M. le Consul de France, was L'Ennuyé, Baron Dormant.

* * *

In 1833 he could stand it no longer, obtained a month's leave from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and fled north to breathe the air of Paris. He was lectured by his friends on dignity and discretion, but he had no need of the lecture; he bridled his tongue and subdued his personality. In December he took the sorrowful road back to Civita Vecchia.

George Sand and Alfred de Musset traveled down the Rhone with him from Lyon to Avignon, on their way to love and Italy.

Musset caricatured Beyle later, and George Sand described him, dressed as for a trip to the north pole in an elaborate traveling hat, cloak and fur boots. His features were still finely chiselled in spite of the increasing rotundity of his person, and his smile was still ironic, his eye mocking. George Sand found him brilliant but a little exhausting with his perpetual fire of criticism, contradiction and attack.

"He made fun," said she, "of my illusions about Italy and assured me that I should soon have had enough of it, and that any artist who went there betrayed his ignorance. I did not much credit what he said, realizing that his point of view was colored by his being in exile there and his unwillingness to return.

"He was amusing on the subject of the typical Italian, whom he could not bear, and toward whom he was most unjust. Above all, he predicted for me a suffering which I never experienced, that of being deprived of amusing conversation and of all that, according to him, makes up the life of the intellect—books, newspapers, gossip—the present, in other words. I could understand perfectly how much such an amusing and affected

mind would miss the companionships that appreciated and stimulated him. His especial pose was pretending to be far above personal vanity, and he loved to ferret out some affectation in every new acquaintance to sear in the flame of his mockery. But I do not believe he was really malicious: he tried too hard to seem so.

"As a matter of fact, all the ennui and intellectual vacuum he predicted for me, attracted instead of frightening me. I was going to Italy, as everywhere else, to fly the very wit of which he believed me enamoured.

"We had supper with a few other chosen travelers in a vile village inn, the steamboat pilot not daring to pass the Saint Esprit bridge till daylight. Beyle was filled with mad gaiety there, got comfortably drunk, and danced around the table in his furred boots looking a little grotesque and not at all pretty.

"As for me, I was not half sorry to see Beyle take the railroad instead of the boat for Genoa: he was afraid of the open sea and wished to reach Rome as soon as possible. We said good-by after several days of amusing companionship. The depths of his spirit betrayed the taste for, the

habit of, or the dream of obscenity: and that alone made me tire rapidly of him. Had he taken the sea route, it is not improbable that I should have gone by train."

And so Stendhal took leave of the delicate-minded lady and set out alone for Civita Vecchia.

Back again to heavy buildings, closed-in streets, San Francesco Piazzo—as deserted as ever, wandering customs officers, and the scoundrel Romanelli, Commissioner of the Port. Back to the Consulate and the dreary lodgings—he had tried for the first time to buy his own furnishings and instill his own personality into his belongings, and they still looked as if they had come with the apartment. His two bookcases, his two sofas, his two desks, were banal and ugly. Only the wall was bearable, with its bronze medallion of La Pasta, and its portrait of Madame LaFarge—who owed that signal distinction to the fact that she had had character enough to poison her husband.

"Coming back from a vacation is always sad. I could write several pages of mellifluous prose on the theme, in the form of a monologue. 'Shall I then languish far from my well-loved home?'—

or perhaps 'Far from my home—' which is the more fashionable beginning at the moment."

* * *

Inevitable old age. . . . The day he first realized he would some day be fifty, he kept repeating to himself with a wry smile: "I am going to be fifty. I am going to be fifty. I am going to be fifty. . . ." The phrase grew into an obsession with him, and, to forget it, he wrote it down on the belt of his white trousers: Once he had written anything it no longer rang in his ears. To confuse the laundress woman and the housekeeper and everybody else, he wrote it in a sort of shorthand:

J. vais-a voir la 5.

But in vain did he attempt to face it philosophically. Fools alone are happy: they can blind themselves to unpleasant truths. Keen eyes are melancholy ones: they see each wrinkle. His hair, which had been a handsome black, was now meretriciously so. His waiving coiffure was borrowed. His stomach . . . his back. . . . He had to have a special chair made in Paris to hold his vast dimensions with comfort.

Someone pointed his double out to him in a café, and Beyle winced to see him. He was atrociously homely. Faded complexion, heavy eyelids, drooping cheeks. . . .

Illnesses at which you snap your fingers when you are young come back and cling as close as leeches after fifty. Young people do not understand that and laugh at it; but the elderly know that when you are old, instead of being happy to have only a few moments of illness, you must be happy to have even a few moments of health. Stomachaches. Headaches. Gout. Colic. Gravelstones. You have to be careful of draughts, and drape yourself in a cap and a nose muff. You have to keep to a diet, as Dominique now did: no acids, no coffee, no hot drinks, especially in the evening —or pains would follow and double him up. Consultations with Dr. Koreff, who could cure anything in the world—but old age. Consultations with M. Chomel in Paris. Agitated letters to Doctor Prevost in Geneva:

"I breakfast on tea and buttered toast. Is that all right? I drink very little wine; but if I drink champagne, I feel less nervous the next day, which seems curious. . . ."

There was little use in crying for help. Nobody can cure the worst suffering of all: the humiliation, the slow, secret dragging down that precedes death.

CHAPTER XVI

Rome

In Ariccia was an inn where one could live like a king for three francs fifty a day. And the Grotta Ferrata was in Ariccia, and around it the Alban Mounts beloved of poetic hearts. Surging up from the deadly plain around Rome, green hills holding in their hands extinguished craters, and bearing two lakes, somber-watered lakes like twin mirrors of the Sleeping Beauty, and cloaked in forests of slumberous oaks where a thousand nightingales waited the rising moon to burst into song.

It was there that Dominique fled the dog days, the malaria, the plague, the cholera morbus and all the other misfortunes threatening unhappy Civita Vecchia. His post no longer saw him much in summer: nor did it see him all the time in winter. He stole excursions when he thought no one was looking. One day found him in Naples, idling on the Via Toledo. A plume of smoke and flame

above the mountain preluded another performance by Vesuvius, and the Neapolitans thronged up the slopes to see the show. A gentle, sticky stream of lava crept ominously down, like a lazy brook about to stagnate. Prince Charles, the King of Naples' brother, tried to print bits of lava with a wooden mold, like butter: the molds were constantly catching fire. Dominique scrambled up as high as he could, pulled by one guide and pushed by another, slipping in the ashes, burning his shoes, slipping back, panting, and sweating, till he could see a little sugar lump spitting incandescent rock in the very center of the crater.

But every road led back to Cività Vecchia. His friends Donato Bucci and Chevalier Manzi had taken to selling and digging antiques, respectively, and with an attempt at interest he entered into the game. They dug around ancient Tarquinus, and found lovely things: black vases, snatched from the darkness of the past, harmonious in form, and instinct with simple nobility, and beautiful medals, to be scratched with a respectful thumbnail till their carving showed through the scum of earth, and then washed and polished till they gleamed to the eye. There was drama in the sound of the

laborer's pick striking sonorously on an ancient tomb, and in the discovery of the skeleton of some prince or warrior living in an ancient time where no modern imagination could rejoin him, dressed in all his ornaments and wearing on his skull a splendid crown. The apparition would not meet the day, the bones crumbled at the touch of air, and all fell into a damp dust, an unwholesome mud, in which they poked around with pins to find the bits of gold.

"I think I shall make a fine antiquarian," said Dominique, who knew perfectly well he would do no such thing, and that he was too fond of living, sentient human beings to become passionately absorbed in decomposed skeletons.

Your true antiquarian grows hot with argument and quarrels bitterly with his best friend over the date of a vase. Your true antiquarian visualizes a city, an epoch and a civilization in every bit of cracked pottery, and would not part with his treasure for an empire. Dominique concealed a smile at his friends' earnestness, and yawned a little at their discussions. He liked the joy of conquest, but not the joy of possession and gave liberally of his discoveries.

A peasant, digging in a hole in the ground near Misena, found two marble heads, one of them worthless, but the other a head of Tiberius himself. An unusual Tiberius, perhaps, with sideburns and a hint of a mustache, but nevertheless recognizable, and exquisitely done. Dominique bought the bust—and here comes the climax to the story—for four piastres! Any collector would have gladly given a hundred for such a *rarissime* piece. For once he experienced that subtle joy known to collectors of owning a valuable object for one tenth its worth. He preserved it carefully as an offering to M. de Molè to prove the good judgment of his most humble servant, Beyle.

"Archæology is fascinating," said Beyle, "and I vow I shall make a good antiquarian." He was thoroughly bored.

His eyes roamed in spite of himself for some place in which he could live his own kind of life and breathe again. Fourteen miles away from Civita Vecchia rose the city which has thrice been mistress of the world. Dominique the Milanese decided to become Dominique the Roman.

* * *

He considered it carefully and decided there was no reason why Paris should know anything about it. Civita Vecchia was evidently impossible, and the Count de Vaux, soul of bureaucracy as he had been, had not scrupled to indulge himself in a little jaunt from time to time. As for the Consul at Ancona, he spent six months out of every twelve in Rome. All Beyle had to do was find himself a quiet corner in Rome and go there when he could.

There was a painter not unknown in Rome named Abraham Constantin. His specialty was painting on porcelain, and he was never at a loss for customers eager to rejoice in a Madonna with the Nightingale on a dinner plate, or the portrait of Julius II on a platter. Constantin was gentle and understanding, with no love for the brutal sense of humor of a Mareste or a Merimée, whose idea of a devastatingly funny joke was to hire somebody to throw a glass of dishwater on Stendhal's new clothes. Constantin was placid and loyal as the Swiss he was. He was not wildly exciting and had no imagination: but he was delightfully dependable.

The two men were so completely opposite that they struck a happy average in their relationship.

Constantin had a house in Via dei Barbieri, near the Teatro Argentina—a street over which houses met to shut away the sky, and where the thin cries of children rose like nightingale songs from the midst of the labyrinth of alleys. His place was big enough to share with Dominique, and Dominique became the master of the house.

It was his refuge till 1833, when he went on leave to Paris. When he came back he contented himself at first with a room in the Hotel Cesari, Via di Petra, where his admirers today still come to trace his shadow. But he wanted some place of his own, a place where he could feel completely detached from Civita Vecchia, and so he found lodgings in the Piazzo Minerva, across from the elephant with an obelisk on its back, and almost in the shadow of the Pantheon.

Roman streets always held carnival. There were Sabine peasants, their tricolored corsets worn over their dress, baskets of flowers swaying on their heads. There were Papal soldiers in yellow and red doublets; Trasteverines with a fierce, sullen look; innumerable priests and myriads of nuns, in peaked caps or cassocks; foreign tourists, the only people who ever hurried in the entire town;

et Flora, la belle Romaine; and men Romans, proud as kings.

Dominique forgot to think of himself at first in his amusement. "See that carriage," he said, "with a red frame, jogging along behind the halting trot of two old nags? With the two starved looking lackeys in apple green livery, hanging on behind, and one of them carrying a red sack? When it goes by the guard, the sentinel will cry out, the soldiers get up and hunt in a leisurely way for their guns. By the time they have found them, the carriage will be half a block down the street and the soldiers will sit down again. If you have the curiosity to peer inside the carriage, you will see a country curate with rather a sickly air. . . ." And so he described the Prince Cardinals of the Church.

As he idled or chatted with Tizio and Caio, he discovered that he was less sensitive to the color of Rome than to its richly mingled odors: the odor of sour fermentation from bakeries, the odor of oil from kitchens, the odor of incense before the Gesu, the odor of flowers in the Piazzo di Spagna, the damp pervading odor of a thousand fountains,

and the odor of spoiled cabbage that routed him from the Corso.

In Via delle Botteghe Oscure, stood a palace like a fortress with grilled windows and iron door jambs, so mighty that it seemed to overpower its lesser neighbors: and on it was inscribed the single word CAETANI. A wealth of power and tradition lay behind that inscription: a long line moved through history in its sound. Dominique went lightly through the door, waved his hand in response to the low bow from the porter, ran gayly up a gigantic stairway, passed through successive salons with a condescending glance at tapestry, picture and statue, and finally reached the boudoir of the princess of the house: a princess who loved art and wit, and was a great friend of Paul Louis Courier. She had three sons, the youngest of whom, Don Philippe, embraced Dominique with affection for they were the best of friends.

Over in Piazza di Pietra, near the smooth polished columns of the ancient temple of Neptune where the Papal customs house had its offices, was another palace bearing the name of JOSEPH CINI. It was less overpowering and less historic than that of the Caetani, and yet not unworthy

of the great eternal city whose nobility found reflection in the dignity of its walls. And it was particularly attractive to Dominique since it sheltered a young Countess Cini of twenty summers, with a flair for flirtation and a carefree laugh that echoed happily in the great salons. Don Michel and Don Philippe Caetani, Count Joseph Cini, his wife and Beyle spent all their evenings together. In the winter they remained in Rome, but in the summer they went out to visit Roman chateaux, and the trees of Genzano, one evening, were witness to the astonishing spectacle of M. le Consul de France playing blindman's buff and staggering down the turf with outstretched arms seeking the Count, or better still his wife.

He sometimes dropped into the Café Greco, which was not a model for all cafés, since it suffered from an eternal indecision as to whether to model itself on a basement or a boudoir. But it had become the gathering place of artists and writers, who played cards, chess or checkers, wreathed themselves in whorls of smoke and talked art. They were as adept in remodelling painting and writing as their cousins in Paris, and Domi-

nique would sit by, listening, and sometimes smiling.

But after a time he would get up with dignity and walk over to the Villa Medici. Once there the city stretched below his feet—domes, campaniles, cupolas, towers and roofs, tossed helter skelter, but ploughed into patterns by the track of the streets. They trembled there in an ocean of light, unobscured by northern smoke or cloud or mist. The tender gray of the rooks melted imperceptibly into the tender blue of the sky, and, as twilight fell, lines and angles were washed away, and he beheld only sweet, reticent nuances, reflections in an old tarnished mirror, shadows of moonlight.

Horace Vernet, the Director of the villa, had a studio under the huge pines, lost in copse and rosebush. He loved greyhounds, monkeys, mandolins, hunting horns, masks, breastplates, foils, bits of brocade and Gothic furniture, and his studio looked like a second hand store: but he was a good sport, and had the unusual merit of holding a perpetual housewarming. His pupils were not so generous, and Dominique had in turn little love for them. They were too young and verdant, perhaps,

for his jealous old eyes. "He is as cross as an old bear," said one of the pensioners, a certain Hebert, a distant cousin of Dominique's from Grenoble. As for Berlioz, he was even more severe, and later wrote at some length of Henri Beyle.

One festival day, he said, the Piazzo Navona, where the houses are built following the line of the old Roman circus, was flooded with water. The fountain tritons and Nereids and sea monsters had blown so much water from their puffed cheeks that the entire place looked like a lake bedecked with flowery boats. On the very edge, their wheels caressed by the water, circled the carriages of the great, come to see and be seen. M. Berlioz, the flamboyant musician, listened to the chatter of the crowd.

"Mirate, mirate! There's the Austrian ambassador."

"It isn't either: it's the English envoy."

"But look at his arms—a sort of eagle . . . "

"That's not an eagle, it's something else; and besides there's that motto: *Dieu et mon Droit.*"

"Well, perhaps. But there's the Spanish consul with his faithful Sancho. Ah! Ah! Rosinante

doesn't seem too pleased at his aquatic promenade."

"That isn't the Spanish consul, it's the French representative."

"Of course, and the old man following him in Cardinal purple is Napoleon's uncle."

"And who's the little fat man with a malicious smile, trying to look serious?"

"Oh that's a great wit who writes art criticism. He's consul over in Civita Vecchia. Why he thinks he has to be fashionable and leave his Mediterranean post to come here and balance himself precariously in an open carriage all around this sewer of a Piazzo Navona. . . . He's probably thinking of another chapter for *Rouge et Noir*. . . ."

And Berlioz added to make sure nobody misunderstood him—for who would know the name of the author of *Rouge et Noir*——

"M. Beile or Bayle or Beyle wrote a life of Rossini under the pseudonym of Stendhal, and brought forth the most irritating stupidities on the subject of music, which he thinks he knows something about."

* * *

Ambassadors were delightfully easy to get along with compared to bureau chiefs. M. de Saint Aulaire, who was in Rome when Beyle first went there, was a sympathetic soul and could hold his peace in any situation: and M. de la Tour Maubourg, who succeeded him in that post, came all the way to Civita Vecchia and realized instantly that it would be too cruel to condemn a poor bored consul to stay at his post. M. de Maubourg was a man of sense. While he was Ambassador, Dominique wandered into the Embassy every other day or so, spent a few minutes chatting about official business, and forwarded any important documents to Lysimaque, who reigned alone in the Consulate to their mutual satisfaction. Life was not too difficult for a time. But Paris somehow got word of what was happening, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs hurried a violent and astonished protest down to Italy. In 1834, after the departure of the benignant Count de Molé, came an official warning, and in 1835 a formal command to stay in his own place and behave himself.

"I have reason to believe, monsieur," wrote M. de Rigny, "that in spite of calling forth from my honored predecessor an Order to obey Article 35

of the Orders of August 20, 1833, and establish a continuous residence in Civita Vecchia, you have again absented yourself very frequently from that city. I cannot close my eyes to such a prolonged, flagrant violation of the rules save in the assurance that it will not be repeated. I urge you to consider the situation carefully, monsieur, if you have any desire to continue in the post H. M. the King has decreed to you, for I cannot by any means exempt you from the universal application of the rules governing the duties of consuls. . . ."

What vile style! grumbled Beyle as he took the long, sun-scorched road back to his post. What a vulgar way of putting things! What injustice! Is it my fault if my health makes it necessary for me to escape this unbearable climate from time to time? I'd like to see M. de Rigny in my place for just a minute: I defy him to spend twelve months a year in such a feverish, malarial climate. What difference can it possibly make whether an agent of the crown stays in Civita Vecchia or in Rome as long as his work gets done? I didn't leave my post anyway: I just moved away from it a little bit. I was never, so to speak, out of sight

of my office. I was never more than seven hours walking distance away—at least, *almost* never. And in any case, I did it with the full knowledge and consent of my immediate superior, the Ambassador. They treat me like a valet, to be dismissed without ceremony, and I have to bow my head to the storm and obey their Article 35, just because I had a father who went bankrupt. It was written from the first that Dominique should know naught but sorrow in his life, and that the world should ravish the least of his pleasures from him. . . .

As a matter of fact, his trips to Rome were now very minor pleasures indeed. He admitted as much to himself: the forbidden fruit, plucked against all official orders, had turned tasteless in his mouth. Rome struck no spark from his eager spirit, and its inhabitants were much like the wine they drank, heavy and heady. They had no conception of conversation in the French sense of the word—verbal interchange that pricks and caresses like a fencing match. Their taste ran to solid jokes and over pointed points: their arguments were inevitably transposed into disputes. If you contradicted one of the lower classes he fell into a fury;

a hidden bitterness lay in their character. Even Don Philippe and the rest of the group he saw every evening were a little bewildered by his witticisms. Rome was only less stifling than Civita Vecchia; and had almost as little mental life and spark. In their sodden climate, the inhabitants lost not only physical energy but the very habit of thought.

"Beyle is now consul in Civita Vecchia," wrote Mareste to Sutton Sharpe. "I saw Horace Vernet, the director of the Roman Academy of Painting the other day, and he told me that the great man is terribly restless in Rome. He tries to talk there as freely as he does in a Parisian salon, and argues and imprecates the way he does here at home. The poor Romans, who live in mortal dread of their benevolent little government, naturally put their fingers in their ears and run, leaving poor Beyle in complete confusion and embarrassment. You know how necessary an audience is to him. He writes me that he is ill, terribly ill, that he is rheumatic, that he is afraid of cholera morbus, and so on. I know just what all of that means: he is bored. . . ."

Mareste read the symptoms rightly: Beyle was

terribly bored. He could not quite adapt himself to the peculiar charm of Rome. Perhaps he had passed the age of infatuation; perhaps he merely realized an insurmountable antagonism between the city and himself. In any case, as time went on his disillusionment grew more and more profound. He said, with melancholy:

"I adored and still adore, at least I believe I do, a fascinating woman a thousand years old. My adoration of her amounted to a frenzy from 1814 to 1821. I obtained her elder sister Rome in marriage instead. The elder sister is gloomy and severe. After four years of *matrimonio,* there is no romance left between us, and I would abandon her with positive relief. . . ."

Yet he admitted that Rome had qualities. The alluvial deposits of all the great ages of history had enriched her beyond comprehension, and she was luxuriant with catacombs, churches and museums. Months and even years could be spent in knowing her; she was Cosmopolis. She was light, and beauty, inexhaustible in variety as in profusion, from the colonnades of Saint Peter, and the pyramids of Cestius, with their grassy tombs, to the temples of the Forum and the lordly palazzos

on the Palatine where sunsets drew out their magic splendors. Dominique had moments of love for her. One of them came to him on a summer's afternoon, when a sea breeze kissed the humid air with salt, and he climbed the slope from the Piazza di Spagna to the Trinita delle Monte. The immense stairway rosé between dew laden houses, in velvety curves; the worn ocher and faded gold of the stones swam in a sea of light; martins played tag above, women leaned on their balustrades, seminarists—black specks girdled in crimson—moved slowly down the steps as if to quiet music. The cracked church bells chimed together and drew the faithful in to greet the close of day. And, from the top, he turned to see a view untouched in any land for harmony and grandeur. That was Rome at its most lovable.

But at other times it was inescapably somber. The massive palazzos seemed to brood on secret sorrows; the mighty statues were congealed in melancholy. The columns of the pagan temples were shattered, and the arches ruined. Children played house with stones from basilisks, and women washed their clothing in the empty graves.

Even the fountains, endlessly rustling, murmured a prayer; the bells rang out complaints and prayers; the crosses all were symbols. Dominique loved life, and Rome spoke only of Eternity.

CHAPTER XVII

Henri Brulard

DOMINIQUE went back to his deserted house and felt very much alone, and realized that he would be alone all his life, and dreamt of hearing a woman's step about him, and her voice. Marriage—ridiculous, disturbing marriage! Often as he banished the thought, it came back again, intrigued and troubled all his nights and days. Is all the liberty in the wide world worth one sure guarantee of affection?

Forgotten dreams quickened to life again at the idea, and the freshest, deepest part of his soul began to look timidly, and hopefully about. He made several tentative steps toward matrimony in those years: but only one of them is really known to us.

There was a French family in Civita Vecchia named Vidau: father, mother and carefree young daughter. Lysimaque said they amounted to nothing, the father being a carpenter, the mother and

daughter laundresses. Their friends, on the other hand, said they were a noble family who had gone through difficulties and now were forced to earn their daily bread. In any case, the Consul of France was not displeasing either to the Vidaus or their daughter: but they were afraid of his religion, or rather his lack of it. The Consul assured them that they need have no fear: he had his own opinions, of course, but he respected those of other people. He no longer kept, he said, the hostility he had once professed toward Catholicism; he stood for liberty in all things. The marriage arrangements were therefore begun, and the ceremony might have taken place, had not M. Vidau happened to mention his projects to a brother who had retired into a Piedmont monastery.—"Beyle!" cried the brother in horror. "You mean *Stendhal,* that archdemon of iniquity and free thinking!" The marriage was, of course, broken off immediately.

And so Dominique remained alone, dreaming still, still humbly offering his heart to an impossible vision of perfection—and still ready to pursue any amorous side tracks he might discover.

Comtesse Sandre, as he called her, from a curi-

ous etymology of his own—Cini, cinis, cendre, Sandre—laughed agreeably at his stories, either because she liked them or because she had remarkably pretty teeth. She was charming, and no prude; and Dominique began to sigh for her. It was Carnival time when this came about, and Rome was noisy with merrymaking. Masked figures, standing in their carriages, threw almonds and flowers to the crowd the length of the Corso from the Piazza Venezia to the Piazza del Populo, and in the evening the theaters were crowded with veglioni and balls, while long-standing liaisons were broken off, and new ones secretly begun. The Countess danced and laughed, and Stendhal watched her: but so did Don Philippe. The two men eyed each other with distrust and jealousy: Don Philippe young, rich and handsome, and Dominique poor, and in declining years.

The two rivals met later in the ball, and held frank conversation. No, they swore, love should never shatter their friendship. Dominique would not attempt to dislodge Philippe from his advantageous place in Comtesse Sandre's affections; and Philippe on his part would let Dominique see

the Countess as much as he would, in simple friendliness.

When Dominique got home he commemorated the event as usual. He wrote in the margin of the book he was reading:

"Sacrifice made. Comtesse Sandre. February 8-17, 1836."

* * *

All his dreams were now of the past.

It was impossible, in those days, to be both a novelist and a professional diplomat. Consuls had a right to sleep, play whist, smoke, read—do anything else they wanted to except write trifles inconsistent with their own dignity and that of H.M. the King of France, the spiritual father of all consuls.—Beyle, wrote of course, as much as ever: but secretly, like a schoolboy making verses under cover of his exercise book.

One day, rummaging in a bookstore, he came across what he believed to be a treasure trove, under a coat of dust as thick as three écus. It was a manuscript, or rather several manuscripts, containing a wealth of marvellous stories: short, melodramatic, passionate stories. When he pulled one down from its shelf, several others came

tumbling after, like cherries. After one glance at them, he called in a scribe and had them copied: and thus he became the owner of a dozen volumes of Renaissance short stories.

For a long time they beguiled his nights. They took him back three hundred years, to a time of love and death and adventure. They called to life Francesco Cenci, who set the world an example in depravity at the time of Pope Clement VIII, and finally tried to seduce his own daughter, Beatrice, when she was beautiful and twenty. Beatrice resisted, and Francesco immured her in the Palazzo de la Petrella; so Beatrice sought the aid of an abbé who loved her and two mercenary assassins, and proceeded to murder her father at the first convenient moment. One of the two assassins was caught, confessed, and accused Beatrice: and a trial began which threw Rome into a tumult. Distinguished advocates spoke in her defense, but Beatrice Cenci died in spite of them at the hand of the public executioner; her young body was exposed all day upon the Ponte di Sant Angelo, and in the evening Roman ladies came, dressed her in a white robe bedecked with flowers, and took her to her grave amidst five hundred torches.

What a tale! Dominique devoured it and went on to others. They were all equally full of admirable crime and violence. What force! cried Dominique, from his drab place in the nineteenth century. What energy! And they must be true, since they were found in genuine old manuscripts. Instead of being the creations of a funereal-minded novelist, they were real flesh and blood people: human beings in the halcyon days of the race, before they were spoiled by too much pampering and civilization; women, before they learned decency and hypocrisy. He vowed to publish them, in a verbatim translation for fear of spoiling them, if ever he had the opportunity in Paris—if ever, he repeated a little wistfully, he had the opportunity. He would even put the Italian text at the disposition of the public, as an example to all faded Frenchmen, to show them how people loved, lived and murdered each other in one of the most magnificent epochs of all history, the splendid Italian Renaissance. Dry and unadorned as they were, they opened vistas into unknown depths of drama, when souls were strong and primitive and savage.

Poor Beyle! He would have turned and rent

anyone who suggested that his beloved documents were really second-hand stories, that his *rarissime* manuscripts were already in any number of public and private libraries, and that his true-to-life tales were romances of the potboiler variety. He would have been furious, and moreover he would not have believed it, for his little Roman tales were his necessary mental food, and he cherished them. The more contemporary Italy disappointed him, the more he turned back to an imagined Italy of the past, perpetually drunk on blood and passion: a past in which art was a burning interest, and people came to blows over a marble or a bronze, or the design of a ring; in which individualism was the philosophy of the times, and vengeance, hate and fury the most delightful of pleasures; a past in which women were exalted and tender, noble and proud, and led such beautiful, passionate lives that by the time they were twenty they had exhausted every human emotion and killed themselves in the satisfaction of having lived out their lives. The nineteenth century world seemed faded and worn to Beyle. Gone was the universal interest not only in parricide, but even in a simple poisoning or assassination. Italy remained the last

outpost of vigorous living, but her inexplicable hankering after Liberty, union, Charters and parliaments was ruining her former character and making her just like every other nation in Europe. The world was empty, the world was dull, and Beyle had only one refuge: to live in the days of the Borgias as in the age of gold.

* * *

"I am so different from what I was twenty years ago that I feel as if I were getting to know a completely new person . . ." said Dominique. The new person was called Henri Brulard.

Henri Brulard was tired of life and disenchanted. Gone were the illusions of Henri Beyle, gone the prideful boasting of M. de Stendhal, gone Dominique's amused pity for himself. Gone were all the ancient hopes for "looks from the loveliest women, honor and riches, happiness in life." Henri Brulard had gout and gravelstones, and he was alone.

Roman light hurt his reddened eyes and he pined for shade. "I have seen too much of the sun," he said. Sitting on the steps of San Pietro in Montorio, on the Janiculum, the light warm wind brushed over his face as it drove little white

clouds before it in the sky above, and his past life rose freshly colored before him. Walking above the Lago di Albano, he stopped and traced letters in the dust of the lonely road:

V. Aa. Ad. M. Mi. Al. Aine. Apg. Mde. C. G. Ar.

They were the initials of the women he had loved, from Virginia Cubly to Madame Azur; and hardly had he traced them when the wind carried them away.

Henri Brulard had more regrets than desires in his soul now, and he had besides two absorbing griefs.

Some men judge, condemn and absolve themselves at their own tribunal: they are merciful toward their own mistakes, for they must have a verdict to let them go in peace toward the unknown countries beyond the gate of death. Not so Henri Brulard, who was incapable of judging himself, and could not know whether he had acted well or badly. The naturalist does not hold moral judgments on his fish or fowl: he takes them as they come, and is content to classify them in family, genre and species. In the same way, Henri Brulard did not criticize himself: he only anal-

yzed, and analyzed to find those two great sorrows in his soul.

The first one lay in the fact that he did not really know himself. He had done nothing but observe himself since earliest boyhood: self-observation was his profession and avocation; not a day had passed that he had not taken his pen in hand to note down the slightest deviations in his sensations and thoughts, in the most scientific manner, and from the most scientific point of view. And after forty years of such cold, precise study he knew himself not at all.

"What sort of a person have I been all my life? To be frank, I have no idea.

"I am famed as a man of wit, and as a heartless roué: and yet I have constantly been obsessed by unhappy love affairs.

"What sort of a person have I been? I shall never know. What friend, close though he be, can tell me? To what friend have I ever spoken one word of all my love and chagrin?

"Have I really been a witty man? Have I had a touch of talent?

"Have I been a genius or an idiot? Hero or coward? And, most of all—happy—or unhappy?"

His second grief was that he had so soon to disappear. The Ego he loved, the strange, strong Ego that dwelt in him, had to dissolve and vanish. Nobody would ever know him better than he had known himself, and no amount of philosophy could vanquish in him that instinct for survival which is the torture of all who think, and the prime cause behind all metaphysics and religion. In spite of himself, he felt like one of those pitiable tourists who must carve their names on the bark of oaks, on plaster walls, on convent slates, before they leave them behind forever. But he turned his instinct to the profit of his Egoism, which was stronger than death. He did not dream to have his soul, his mind, his happy shadow survive. He willed his brilliant Ego to the future.

So he set to work, and in the pursuit of his own self-knowledge and also in the hope that successive generations might stop to admire the portrait, he collected and welded into a single work the mass of notes that he had made from day to day. And so he wrote the *Life of Henri Brulard,* built to last eternally, if fate was kind, as Henri's monument.

He labored at the task with loving care, and

chose the liveliest colors to resist the passage of time. The problem was difficult: vanity would intervene to smooth down a disagreeable trait, and he had to vanquish the liar: memory would refuse to yield up dates and facts, and he had to spur the laggard.

The underlying trouble with Henri Brulard was that he was no longer fresh and vigorous enough for his task. "As for me," he said, "I plan to spend my old age, should I be allotted one, in polishing up the history of a human being I loved, and in dealing deserved insults to some I did not care for."

And he attempted to do so in *Henri Brulard,* without ever perceiving that he lent convictions to the little boy in the Rue des Vieux Jesuites that belonged only to the embittered old man in Civita Vecchia, and that he transformed a normal little boy,—with however admirable technic,—into a napoleonic child with a spoiled imagination, ever divided between love and fury.

As he progressed in his work and brought his hero down to Milan, he began to be filled with doubts about the future of his manuscript. His whole life lay in it, written in such discreetly

illegible handwriting that no human being could possibly read it, and he wanted to take no chance on its being lost and forgotten. Passers-by in the Palais Royal must stop and see the *Vie d'Henri Brulard* in the windows of the bookstores after he lay buried in Rome or Civita Vecchia: that would be his compensation. He wrote a codicil to his will:

"I give and bequeath the present volume to M. le Chevalier Abraham Constantin, of Geneva, painter on Porcelain. If M. Constantin has not found means to publish it in the thousand days following my death, I give and bequeath it successively to M. Alphonse Levasseur, publisher, 7, Place Vendôme; Philarette Chasles, man of letters; Henri Fournier, publisher, Rue de Seine; Paulin, publisher; Delaunay, publisher: and if none of these gentlemen take it upon themselves to print it in the five years following my death, I leave the volume to the dean of the London publishers, whose name begins with a C."

He threw a bottle into the sea in those words.

Life no longer gave him the right to worry over the future: the play was made, and he had placed his last bet. If he worried, he had less than noth-

ing left: his only hope was to be sure. He had been above fashion and easy success; he had disdained the meretricious prettiness that attracts readers. He knew that no contemporary would or could understand him. His failure or his immortality was in the phantom hands of a public yet unborn. So he said: "I will be read about 1880. I will begin to be read in 1900. I will be read in 1935."—ever putting the date off to make it surer. And he repeated his proud, desperate defiance time and time again, like a man who sings to cover a secret terror.

CHAPTER XVIII

"And then, suddenly, you suffer no longer: the moment is past, and you are dead."

Henri Beyle to Conte di Cini, Rome
Paris, March 29, 1837

Your letters, my dear Count, are charming. I have never read anything better expressed nor more amusing. One of these days I shall dictate a long letter to you, but as a friend is leaving for Marseille in an hour, I want merely to make some sign of life.

The weather has been abominable until today, and yet Paris, weather or no, is a perfect place to live. You should have seen the ball in the Tuilleries: the line of salons, all brilliantly illuminated, was as long as six times the Palazzo Chigi on the side by the piazza. As for the cost of living, a magnificent room with two large closets in the smartest section is 65 francs, valeting service, 12, dinner, 5 and breakfast, 2. As for my loves, they are on the order of the Madame Martini who was in Rome a couple of years ago, and they cost me 120 francs a month. Of course, I do not insist on superhuman fidelity. . . ."

In short, funereal thoughts were banished and a resurrection had taken place. Beyle had obtained a congé in May, 1836, and since Count de Molé was now in power, he had followed the sacred example of Saint Elizabeth who came to spend a day and remained six months. Beyle came for a month and stayed three years: three halcyon years.

In the evening there was the Opera, or the Comédie Française, where a skinny little thing of eighteen played tragedy as if she had written her own lines, and swept Paris off its feet till it battered at the doors to see her, and showered the theatre with six thousand francs each time Mlle. Rachel played. There was the Variétés, with dancers come all the way from India to beguile the Parisians. There were salons, the fashionable bazaar for Poland in which the loveliest women of every nation kept the booths, or Madame Judith Gautier's—the admirable Jules to whom he was sincerely devoted. And there was the gayest, and therefore the most admirable, society—that of the ladies of the ensemble. Life was so rich in entertainment that there remained only the difficult choice between pleasures. He was free. He could

visit the provinces or dash over to London. He could stay in Paris. His work at the Ministry was only an excuse for drawing half pay and living in France: it was so light, so very light, as to be practically non-existent. Henri Beyle lived once more.

Old friends held a reunion: Merimée, Mareste, Colomb, di Fiore: a little worn they were, a little halt with age, but standing straight under the weight of years as one does in Paris. Mareste was troubled with a cough. Colomb was red in the face, and had to be bled now and again to avoid apoplexy. Di Fiore still looked like Jupiter Masuetus, but like rather a plump version of the deity —he had outgrown his romantic, condemned man appearance. But sick or well, thin or fat, they received the exile with open arms, and took up their conversation again as if it had broken off the night before. With a little squeezing there was room for him at their dinners again, and they organized the same old picnics—before the clock in the Rue Taitbout; and then off to Meudon.

Merimée had got on in the world, and knew thousands of people. One of his best friends was a Spanish lady, Contessa de Montijo, who had

two adorable daughters, little Eugenia and Paquita: Eugenia was the beauty of the family, as Napoleon III was one day to discover. Merimée presented Henri Brulard to them, and Henri became a friend of the entire family and tossed the children on his knee.

"Tell us a nice story," they would say, and Henri would begin obediently:

"It was at Wagram. The Colonel commanding the Sixth Dragoons cried: 'Sound the charge.' Every horseman adjusted his casque, and——"

Or perhaps:

"The little Corporal took me by the ear that day at Görlitz, and said——"

For they always asked for Napoleon, and he gave them Napoleon. One evening he even gave them a Napoleonic picture: the Battle of Austerlitz, with a bright red sun which shone on cannon and sabre and threw an aureole around the Emperor's face; they looked at it in wonder.

Civita Vecchia was nothing but a bad dream. News came one day that Lysimaque, the swine, had forced the lock of the consul's room, inspected his papers and stolen his shirts—but it seemed unimportant. More unpleasantness in Civita

Vecchia only increased the charm of Paris by contrast. Henri Brulard waxed heated and accused Parisians of being decadent, Parisians listened with pleasure, and everybody was happy.

His method of literary work was curious. He was perfectly capable of writing, or better still of dictating, five or even six hours in succession. But he had to have a complete break in the evening, something to make him forget his work and give him a rebirth of thought, so that the next morning, he could reread or have read to him the lines he had finished the day before and start out on a fresh track. Salons, theatres, walks, meetings and conversations gave him the change he needed, and he began to write voluminously again. It is a not unusual effect of Paris air.

Pages followed pages, and his room in the Hotel Favart looked like an office, piled up with manuscripts and placards. Since voyages were popular and the Romantics were engaged in discovering France, he indulged himself in the *Memoirs of a Tourist*. It was hack work, and badly paid—1560 francs for the entire manuscript—but he was engaged in discovering life again and no work seemed too arduous. He invented a traveling sales-

man in the iron line, first cousin to the cotton bonnet manufacturer who had once scandalized Madame Ancelot, and sent him out into the country which idiots called *'la Belle France.'*

The traveling salesman was no generous critic: he put Lyonnais, Marseillais, Bordelais, Poitevins, Bretons and Normans alike in their place, and spared none of the absurd country between Belgium and Spain. He described churches, pictures and statues meant to rejoice mankind, threw in generous handfuls of his own ideas on religion, politics, and the bizarre customs of humanity, and occasionally stopped to steal choice bits from ancient and modern authors, dead and alive. He hammered away at it till—Stop! cried the editor. I have never known such a generous writer. I asked him for two volumes, and he has already given me three for the same price. Where will he end? . . . He had to suppress a few chapters to bring it down to commercial size. When he saw it in print, he was only half pleased:—and the public, not at all.

Things went differently with the *Chartreuse de Parme,* written with the same lightning speed. The editor gave him 2500 francs—prices were go-

ing up—but money made no difference to him in this case. The book was the beloved of his heart. In it he sang his hymn to life, but in a sweeter, more poetic key. His dearest memories were wrapped up in it, and Italy lived there in all her pristine beauty. His proud hero Fabrice was more than ever Beyle's ideal of what a man should be: Gina and Clelia, the ardent and the tender mistress, incarnated the qualities he had never found throughout his search through life for love of women.

What would the public say? They would be stupid as ever, in all probability. But the few, the happy few, might seek it out.

* * *

And then Count de Molé fell from power and Civita Vecchia could no longer be deprived of its consul. Stendhal went back into exile with a hanging head.

It was years since he had first set forth on his travels, and now all the roads in Europe knew him: roads in Germany, Austria and Russia; roads in England, roads in Switzerland, Italy and France; roads in the lowlands and in the highlands; roads planted with young beech trees, roads

lying straight through the rice fields, roads framed in vistas of vines and olive trees, and roads in the Roman campagna where antique tombs kept guard. He was akin to all of them, wandering, restless spirit that he was: and never had they seen him so tired or so solitary as on this, his next to last voyage. He left Paris in June; he reached Civita Vecchia in August.

To M. le Maréchal Soult, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Paris.
Civita Vecchia, August 10, 1839

Monsieur le Ministre:

In pursuance of Your Excellency's orders, I have again assumed my position as head of the consulate at Civita Vecchia on this day of August 10. I should have been able to do so sooner had I not been delayed in Genoa and Livorna with attacks of gout.

I have the honor to be, M. le Ministre, etc.

Henri Beyle

* * *

And then, at last, came the greatest joy of all, the one desired above all others.

Glory appeared in the distance and beckoned to him.

He had resigned himself to the ordinary course

of his life, all hope abandoned; he had come back philosophically to his office and to Lysimaque, (who was full of importance and had an eye out for the Legion of Honor—why not?) He had come back to Rome, and the Palazzo Caetani, and the Palazzo Cini, and found still another lodging place, this time in the foreign quarter, 43 Via Condotti, almost on the Corso, and from which he could watch people go by.

His friend Constantin was there, the same as ever; but he had been bitten with the urge to write, and contracted for a volume with Viesseux in Florence. His work was to be called *"Italian Thoughts on Certain Contemporary Paintings,"* and his chief idea about it seemed to be that he wanted extra fine paper and good clear type. Henri Brulard felt a book should have something more than that, and set to work to make it what a book should be—in other words the work of Henri Beyle: in pursuance of which end he corrected proofs, rewrote phrases and recast chapters until M. Constantin must have had difficulty in recognizing his brain child.

Villa Medici was now under the direction of M. Ingres; Brulard would have much preferred

his old friend Vernet. As for the students, they were as disrespectful as ever toward the dignity of age.

Archæological pursuits occupied him for a time, and he found eleven antique statues, slightly larger than life and for the most part very beautiful: treasures which, said Henri, the French government would certainly buy if they had any sense. There were also Etruscan vases, carved stones and medals—all of them of such pure simplicity as to be just what most Parisians needed to cure them of their taste for knick-knacks. He also bought a gun and hunted. It was, he decided, much like the eternal hunt for happiness: he killed several inoffensive larks and missed the big game.

And so back came the old life, the old amusements, and the old emptiness—only to be broken, unexpectedly, gloriously broken, in October, 1840, by the arrival of the Marseille boat bringing striking news of Stendhal's nascent glory. Balzac, the great Balzac, master and judge, had devoted no fewer than seventy pages in his Revue Parisienne to a criticism of the *Chartreuse de Parme,* which he declared to be the greatest novel of the century, and a true masterpiece. A masterpiece! He

praised the immense talent of the author, and his vigorous originality: and compared him most favorably to Machiavelli, La Rouchefoucauld, Walter Scott, Byron, Corneille and Shakespeare. "The most powerful example we have seen of the modern trend in the novel," he said.

Stendhal read and reread the glowing pages, tremulous with joy at the light that was falling at last on his name. Justice had come, hand in hand with glory. Once the great Balzac had crowned him with laurel he would inevitably be famous and find his vindication in posterity. There had been only one reservation in the critic's eulogy. "The weak side of his work," said Balzac, "is his style. M. Beyle's writing is careless and incorrect . . . His long sentences are badly constructed; his short sentences formless. I can only wish that M. Beyle had set to work to polish the *Chartreuse de Parme* and give it that quality of perfection and irreproachable beauty which Chateaubriand and de Maistre have bequeathed to their beloved books . . ." But that was something he might accomplish; he set to work to take the one step necessary to reach the summit.

And then, about the same time, he noticed a

disturbing thing. French words would suddenly fail him. He would be completely unable, for instance, to say *"Donnez-moi de l'eau"* at dinner. He could walk, sit down, undress, go to bed—but his tongue refused him the simplest words. Such fits lasted from eight to ten minutes each time, and left him weak and exhausted. Sometimes a single expression might be missing, while others would come at will. One evening, for instance, dining in an *osteria* with Constantin, he made superhuman, and vain, efforts to remember the word *'verre.'* He had had violent headaches, besides, for six months, and a dull heaviness in his head; and four or five times a day, he was seized with a fit of suffocation. Once, looking at a statue of love clipping its own wings in a student exhibition at the Villa Medici, he thought he was going to choke to death on the spot. Finally, there were fits of dizziness, in which the walls turned round him, the sidewalks wavered, and his desk disappeared completely from before his eyes.

Doctors disagreed in their diagnoses. One wanted to try homeopathy. Another assured him that since his gout was no longer sinking to his feet it was quite naturally rising to his head.

Roman celebrities were consulted, not to mention an illustrious German on his way through town, and the private consultant to His Holiness. They bled him a great deal: and after the ninth bleeding, the ubiquitous gout decided not to rise to his head any more. But his tongue was still thick, and he mumbled his words.

Glory had been too slow in coming, and death was running ahead: he awaited it calmly. He was alone, and helpless save for the excellent Constantin, who mendaciously assured him that he had had many friends suffer from the same disease and recover completely. He had no other ally against the enemy; no one to love him, and no one for him to love, save two dogs whom he adopted out of a desperate need for affection. Fat Barbara, who did his housework, stole everything she could, even his boots: and he dared not speak severely to her, since he might sometime call out to her in agony, needing a pitying witness when he crossed the great dim passageway.

And yet he did not tremble nor shut his eyes to the inevitable. "I am at grips with the eternal nothingness," he said. Nothingness was all he expected.

One of the best portraits he ever traced of himself, and one of the least known, is to be found in an unfinished story which was to be called: *A Position in Society.*

"M. Roizand. Apparently endowed with a most changeable character, touched to tears at a word, and a moment later hard and ironic for fear of being looked down upon as weak. He would have spilled gallons of blood—theoretically—to accomplish his social reforms. He was a man of over forty, moderately large, with big features, not handsome, but alive. His eyes betrayed his slightest nuances of feeling, and embarrassed him by thus contradicting his words. When he feared such a misfortune to his pride, he was at his best: witty, brilliant, and fascinating his audience till any salon was divided between hate and admiration. 'He is the cleverest, wittiest person in the world,' said his admirers: but his very vivacity and unexpectedness struck fear into commonplace minds and won him many enemies. He was not witty unless he was emotionally keyed up; nor had he, at such moments, any memory; at least he disdained to call it to his aid. His speech was as discreet as his facial expression was indiscreet; and

his pride would have been humiliated beyond endurance had anyone penetrated his careful disguise. A touching word, or an honest expression of grief overheard as he was going into some humble shop, would surprise tears in his eyes: but any pomposity, any shadow of affectation in the expression of an emotion, however legitimate the cause, instantly transformed Roizand's whole attitude into one of ruthless sarcasm . . ."

Roizand while Secretary in the Embassy at Rome, fell in love with Duchesse de Vaussay, a lady who was obsessed by the fear of death. She trembled to appear before the seat of divine justice, and her days were shadowed with terror. Roizand could not grasp her point of view: it was so different from his that he could not sympathize. For his part, he enjoyed everything within the range of actual life, and believed in nothing beyond it. The idea that death might be a beginning instead of an end was foreign to his spirit: death, to him, was an easily crossed border into the land of nothingness. He replied once to Madame de Vaussay's cries of anguish:

"But, Madame la Duchesse, death is a word devoid of true meaning. It is only an instant, and

usually barely felt. You suffer, you are astonished at your strange sensations, and then a moment later you no longer suffer: the instant is passed, and you are dead. Have you ever gone under the bridge of the Saint Esprit across the Rhone near Avignon? You always talk about it ahead of time, and are filled with fear as you see it approaching in the distance; it draws nearer, and suddenly the boat is caught up in a powerful current, and in a twinkling of an eye, you have been carried past, and the bridge lies behind you."

The hour of trial found him still true to this profound conviction, and true to the principles of stoicism which had always determined his life. He accepted his own being and his own character with clear-eyed fatalism: "What is this thing called 'myself'? I have absolutely no idea. I woke up one day on this earth to find myself linked to a certain body, a certain character, a certain fortune. Why should I seek to try to change them and forget to live? It would be mockery . . ." His calm, despairing fatalism was his only refuge from the agony of death. Henri Brulard, the Epicurean, looked his fate in the face without wincing.

And in the meantime he was seized with a new surge of energy. After stopping in Geneva to consult Dr. Prevost, he reached Paris once more on November 8, 1841. He felt better, physically, and could be seen on the Boulevards and in the Café Anglais. He made new literary projects, and March 21, 1821, wrote the editor of the *Revue des Deux Mondes* that he would accept his terms and publish first in his magazine and then in book form, all his stories and novels to come.

At seven in the evening of March 22, just outside the door of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Rue Neuve des Capucines, he fell on the sidewalk with a stroke of apoplexy. Only a year before he had said: "I have hidden my illness well. I see nothing ridiculous in dying on the street if you don't do it deliberately . . ." They carried him back to his home—which was only his hotel—and he died at two in the morning without regaining consciousness.

Romain Colomb, his cousin, took charge of the funeral arrangements. He ordered a funeral mass at the Church of the Assumption, and there candles, symbols of the eternal light, burned for Henri Beyle, and prayers to the Savior out of the

depths of the abyss rose for his soul. His coffin rested beneath a Cross.

* * *

Romain Colomb to Sutton Sharpe in London.

Monsieur:

I learned yesterday from M. Merimée that you intend to come to Paris. . . . If in the course of your walks you should wish to visit the last resting place of our poor friend, in the Montmartre cemetery, you will find the little monument beneath which he sleeps at the round point of the Cross, line fourteen, number eleven: with the Italian epitaph he composed inscribed upon it.

With all good wishes, monsieur, believe me, faithfully yours,

R. Colomb

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